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TWO BIG SHAWNEES JUMPED UP FROM BEHIND A LOG.—*Page 4.*

LOST IN THE FUR COUNTRY

BY
D. LANGE

AUTHOR OF "ON THE TRAIL OF THE SIOUX" AND
"THE SILVER ISLAND OF THE CHIPPEWA"

ILLUSTRATED BY GRISWOLD TYNG



BOSTON
LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO.

CHILDREN'S ROOM

J. FICTION

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LOST IN THE FUR COUNTRY

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U. S. A.

PREFACE

The scene of this story is laid on the great fur-trading route which a hundred years ago extended from Montreal, Quebec, and Detroit, on the east, to Lake of the Woods and Fort Garry, on the west, and to Hudson Bay, on the north. Most of the region through which passed this greatest canoe route in the world was then a primitive wilderness occupied by various Indian tribes, which often made warlike excursions. But white traders had already established their log-house stores as far west as the Rocky Mountains; and the Hudson Bay Company, the Northwest Company, and numerous independent traders were bidding for the fur secured by the Indians, and the native tribes had become dependent on the goods furnished by the white traders. The fur trade at that time was in a state of unrestricted competition, and while the Indians received fair prices, the moral influence of these conditions upon the Red Man was bad.

“Lost in the Fur Country” is in all its essentials a true story. I have taken great pains to show the times and the life of the Indians as they really were, without creating false heroes. Most of the characters are historical, as for instance,

the boy John, and his good and resourceful Indian mother, Netnowa.

The conditions of savage life in North America necessarily produced a hardy and warlike race, a race which had to know the country and be able to wrest a living from the wilderness. The Indians were great travelers, and many of them knew intimately the great canoe routes extending thousands of miles to the west from Detroit, Montreal, and Quebec. They were not book geographers, but they carried in their heads a map of a large part of the continent with which they had become acquainted by traveling over it in canoes or on foot.

The Indian mother, Netnowa, actually made the long journey from Lake Huron to the plains of the Assiniboin, as is told in the story, and although her name is little known to historians, she was of that patient, noble kind of savage women of which Sacajawea, the guide of Lewis and Clark, has become the historical impersonation.

D. LANGE.

*Saint Paul, Minnesota,
July, 1914.*

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LOST IN THE FUR COUNTRY

CHAPTER I

THE KIDNAPPED TWINS

JOSHUA RUNNELS, frontier settler in Kentucky, sat down to dinner with a gloomy face.

“There are some villainous Shawnees lurking around again in the timber,” he remarked, “and you twins had better stay in the cabin this afternoon. The horses have snorted and acted queer all morning, which is a sure sign that there are Indians around. The man who came by here yesterday told me that twenty miles up the Ohio some Shawnees had a fight with a settler. The settler was badly wounded and one of the Indians was killed. Now the Indians are lurking about watching for a chance to kill or injure some white man so as to square the account. I’ll take the rifle and watch while the older boys may drop corn. It’s time to get the seed in the ground, and I don’t think the Indians will bother us if they see that we are ready for them.”

The twins, John and Ellen, eleven years old, were told to take care of their baby sister while their mother was busy with housework and the two older boys were planting corn in the clearing around the cabin.

Joshua Runnels with his family had settled on the banks of the Ohio in Kentucky five years ago, in 1801. He was, like Daniel Boone, one of those bold, fearless men who preferred the freedom and the danger of the Indian frontier to the restrictions and security of older settlements. The roaming bands of Shawnees were afraid of this man of the long rifle, the thick black beard, and the fearless eyes, and thus far they had never molested him. His wife was kind to them and no red man ever left her cabin hungry, but the Long Gun, as they called Joshua, never allowed more than two of them in the cabin at the same time. When he shot at a mark with some of his red visitors, he always carried his hunting-knife in his belt and both of his older sons always hung around with their guns, although they never took part in the contest.

“They shoot with you when they are men,” Joshua told the Shawnees, “they are just boys now.”

When several years ago two Indians had asked for a drink of the white man's milk, Joshua had sternly told them: "My white man's milk is in the well. Go and drink a bucketful if you wish."

At that the Indians grew ugly and one of them started to open a cupboard, but before they realized what had happened to them, big Joshua had taken both by the nape of the neck and sent them sprawling into the soft snow outside. After that no Indian ever asked for firewater in the cabin of Joshua Runnels.

"The Long Gun," they told one another, "is a big chief. His arms are strong as those of the black bear and he never sleeps with both eyes closed."

The last remark showed that the Indians knew perfectly well why Joshua Runnels always carried his big hunting-knife and why he would not let his sons shoot at a mark with them.

About the middle of the afternoon of our story, the baby fell asleep, and now the twins could not resist the temptation of slipping away to a big walnut-tree which stood on the edge of the clearing a few rods below the cabin. The old tree had borne so abundant a crop of nuts in the fall that the gray squirrels had not been able to carry them

all away. Many a time the twins had gathered from the brush a hatful of the rich black nuts, mellowed and sweetened, it seemed, by the frost of winter. It was great fun to crack these nuts in front of the fireplace in the evening, while baby cooed on Mother's lap and laughed at the sparks from the big hickory logs, and Father told stories about hunting bears and fighting Indians and about George Washington and the terrible winter at Valley Forge.

"I'll ask Father to tell us more about Daniel Boone to-night," whispered John, as the children crept about on their knees and gathered the nuts into an old felt hat.

"Let's run home now," Ellen suggested, "I'm afraid of the Indians."

The children had just risen and started for the cabin when two big Shawnees jumped up from behind a log. One seized the girl who was small for her age and ran toward the river with her; the other seizing her brother by the arm and holding one hand over the boy's mouth, dragged his victim down to the banks of the Ohio. After hastily taking an apron from the girl and a jacket from the boy and after throwing these articles

away on a trail leading southward, they placed the frightened children in a canoe.

“You holler, we kill you, and throw you in big river!” the older of the Indians threatened the frightened children as he brandished his tomahawk over their heads, and then they quickly paddled across to the north side of the Ohio.

Upon landing there, two other Indians sprang out of the woods and showed great joy at the capture made by their friends. They hid the canoe among some bushes and then all began to march northward. John, who was quite large for an eleven-year-old boy, had to walk ahead between two Indians, while the other two took turns in carrying Ellen. The Indians were in a great hurry and after a while they seemed to think that the boy could walk faster barefooted, and made him take off his shoes, which they threw away. Walking barefooted, although he could run along faster at first, proved a great hardship to the boy, for brambles and other brush cut his feet so they were soon sore and bleeding, but still his captors hurried him on.

At the first opportunity, John whispered to his sister: “It’s the two fellows that Father threw

out in the snow a long time ago. I know one of them by the scar over his left eye. But don't be scared, Ellen! Father will soon get us and they won't dare to hurt us. Don't cry, Ellen. Sure, I tell you, the Shawnees are all afraid of Father!"

Having been born on the Kentucky frontier, John had already picked up a good deal of woodcraft, and as soon as he realized what had happened to him and Ellen, he began to make plans for their escape. He noticed with special care every fork and branch on the trail. An old elm fallen across the trail he marked in his mind, a creek of some size which crossed the trail was another landmark, and he did not fail to observe the general landscape and note that they were traveling up hill and were going north in the valley of the Big Miami. But it was not until evening that he had another chance to whisper a few words to his sister:

"If Father doesn't get us before dark, we'll run away when they're asleep. I know the trail home."

Ellen was so upset by their experience that she did not answer a word but looked at her brother in a dazed way, as if he had been saying some-

thing in Shawnee, but one of the Indians, who had probably divined the meaning of the words, sprang at the boy with raised tomahawk and would have killed him if Kishawko, the younger of his captors, had not quickly sprung up and taken the tomahawk from the angry Indian.

“That man wanted to kill my brother,” he said to his father, Mishawbo, together with whom he had captured the two white children; “we must watch him.”

After this event the children tried not to provoke the anger of their captors, because from the many stories about captured children and white people, which were current fireside tales in those days, they remembered that the Indians often killed captured whites at the most trifling provocations.

For supper the Indians had smoked venison and bear oil, but on account of the great excitement and fatigue they had suffered, the children could eat only a mouthful of venison. The bear oil they would not touch at all, although the Indians told them by means of signs it would make them strong and enable them to walk fast and far.

When night came, they made John lie down between Mishawbo and Kishawko, but to Ellen they

simply gave a blanket and allowed her to sleep where she pleased, because they were not afraid that the little girl would try to escape alone.

John lay down fully resolved to carry out his plan of escape, but so tired was he from the long march that he fell into a sound sleep before either of the Indians, and he did not awaken until old Mishawbo aroused him at sunrise next morning.

On the second day, the Indians again traveled rapidly northward. At noon, old Mishawbo, noticing that the boy's bare feet were bleeding and swollen with many sores, pulled numerous thorns out of them. And after the boy had washed his sore feet in a creek, the old man rubbed some bear oil on them and gave him a pair of moccasins. As they traveled along, the boy still took careful note of the trail, intending to carry out his plan of escape that night, but at night he again fell asleep before any of his captors and did not awake until Mishawbo roused him to continue the march.

In the forenoon of the third day they came to a river of considerable width and depth. The Indians took off their blankets, placed the children on their shoulders and waded across, the water reaching up to their armpits. Having crossed

this river, the Indians walked more slowly and seemed no longer afraid of being overtaken by any pursuing whites. Mishawbo and his son with the children walked ahead, while the other two men fell behind.

At noon the children were no longer watched closely, and sauntering a little way off the trail, John told Ellen:

“Don’t be afraid of that river. I can swim it and I’ll take you across on a log. Be sure you get up quick when I call you, and don’t say a word. But maybe Father and the boys will soon catch up with us.

“Now, Ellen, remember: If there is a fight when Father comes you can run and hide in the woods so they can’t shoot you. I just wish I had a gun or only a big knife!”

While the Indians were making a fire, the children found the nest of a wild turkey and Mishawbo laughed and started to cook the eggs for dinner. But just then the other two men came running up, and after some excited talk, the Indians hurriedly picked up their blankets and kettles, threw the turkey eggs into the bushes and marched as fast as they could until evening. John and Ellen both understood that they were

being pursued, but the Indians gave them no chance to escape.

When it had grown almost too dark to travel, the Indians came to a large river which they crossed on two logs crudely tied together with grape vines. After crossing, they pushed the logs back into the water and let them drift down stream. On the further side they camped for the night without, however, building a fire. This river, the children learned later, was the Maumee, which flows northward into Lake Erie.

The Indians now seemed to think that their captives could no longer escape, so they gave each of the children a blanket and let them select their own sleeping place.

“We can’t run away to-night,” said John. “We are too far from home and there is no white settlement along the trail between here and the mouth of the Big Miami. We’ll make them think that we are lost now and feel afraid to run, but the first time we camp near a white settlement, we’ll get up at night and run for our life.”

CHAPTER II

DOWN THE MAUMEE

THE children had already learned to sleep like Indians with their blankets tucked over their heads. As the night air grew raw they nestled closer together, and half awake, the girl reached out her hand to make sure that her brother was still there.

When the stars had faded away and the white trunks of the big sycamores began to stand out clearly along the river bank, the Indians arose and went into the woods in different directions. The children heard them hack at a tree here and there, while one kept calling to the other. The children not understanding what the Indians were intending to do, Ellen's lively fancy at once called up a scene of Indian horrors.

"John," she whispered, her eyes dilated with fear and her small body shivering with cold, "they are going to tie us to a tree and burn us. Let's run away quick!"

"Stay here, Ellen!" cried the boy, "we can't

run away. We're over a hundred miles from home. They'd soon catch us again and then they'd be angry and might kill us; but if we stay they'll not harm us. Come, let's see what they are doing."

The Indians were now hard at work cutting down two large hickory trees. When the trees fell they peeled the bark from each trunk, taking great care to have it come off as one piece from the long straight bole, and the children wondered what they might intend to do with two large white hickories. But the Indians turned all their attention to the long rolls of bark. Two men cut a number of sticks and fastened them crosswise in the slits of the bark so as to allow a man to sit down in the long roll. The other two men took some rawhide thongs out of their deerskin pouches and began skillfully to tie up, or rather sew up, the ends of the long rolls of bark.

"I know what they are doing," said John, "they are making two hickory-bark canoes and we'll all go down the river in them. I'm glad we won't have to walk any more. My legs ache just awfully, and my feet are all sore."

It was still far from noon when the canoes were finished and each Indian having made him-

self a paddle out of a young hickory, they traveled rapidly down stream, two Indians and one child seated in each canoe.

As the children watched bend after bend of the river, as they saw a deer come down to drink and a black bear swim across the stream so close to the canoes that the Indians could not resist emptying their guns at him when he scrambled out on the opposite shore, they almost forgot that they were captives far from home and that they might never see their father and mother again.

“Rotten shooting, rotten!” exclaimed John, “Father would have dropped him dead,” as the bear disappeared in the timber; but when Kishawko scowled at his white brother and said: “*Shawashee!*” which John understood at once to mean: “Shut up!” the white boy remembered that he was not hunting with his white brothers.

Neither John nor Ellen had ever traveled in a canoe before, and Ellen was at first much afraid of the bark craft which their captors had made in a few hours; but so skillfully did the Indians handle the canoes and so swiftly did they push them along that John wished that he also had been given a paddle. Several times they passed into very swift water, but the Shawnees never

hesitated about the course, although none of them ever seemed to say a word about steering the canoes. About noon they were overtaken by a flock of passenger pigeons, larger than the children had ever seen, although in those days large flocks of those magnificent birds were as well known as sparrows are nowadays to every American boy. For two hours the birds continued to pass northwards, and at times the flocks were so dense that they shaded the canoes like fast-drifting clouds and the whirr and whistle of myriads of wings made a noise like a storm in the forest, and with four loads of shot the Indians brought down more than twenty birds.

The anxiety of the children was again aroused when toward evening they saw a large Indian village at the end of a bend in the river. When the six travelers landed, a great commotion arose. Dozens of curs yelped and barked at the strangers, and a hundred warriors, squaws, and children gathered around them as if the white children had been some rare wild animals captured in the forest. A savage-looking man pressed through the crowd, and with uplifted tomahawk tried to kill the captives, because, as he said, the whites had killed his son. However,

Kishawko and Mishawbo seemed to have anticipated something of the kind, for they remained beside their captives, and holding the man's arms, told him that the two white children belonged to them. When he saw that they were in earnest and ready to fight for their captives, he went away, but either Kishawko or Mishawbo watched the children all evening. For the night the two Shawnees and their captives were assigned a vacant tepee, and old Mishawbo slept near the entrance so that no one could enter the lodge unknown to him.

But although they knew that they were well protected, the children did not fall asleep for a long time; for the Indian village was a very noisy place. Numerous dogs kept up their yap-yap-yap, children cried, drums beat, and until midnight there was singing and dancing at some kind of a feast in a large tepee. At a distance in the woods a lone wolf uttered a most dismal howl and whenever a moccasined Indian passed the tepee, the children thought it was the man who intended to kill them.

They were glad when their captors started so early in the morning that only a few old squaws were seen stirring about the lodges. But the

figure of the angry Indian did so fill little Ellen's mind that her frightened imagination saw a big Indian with bow and arrow stand behind every large tree taking aim at her, and she crouched low between the gunwales until the canoes had rounded the next bend a mile below the village.

About noon the party reached a trading-house kept by several white men. The Indians landed and left the children for a few hours with the traders while they visited some friends who were camping in the neighborhood. The traders tried to buy the captives, but Mishawbo would not sell them. "I must bring them to my squaw," he said. "Neekeewas will cry very loud and call me Afraid-of-the-Whites if I do not bring them. Her little son, he died, and Neekeewas cried very much."

From the traders' house a large lake was in view, and John learned that it was Lake Erie and that the river on which they had come was the Maumee. He also learned that Mishawbo and Kishawko lived at the village of Saginaw, three days' travel north of Detroit, and not far from the west shore of Lake Huron. When the boy heard that Detroit was a fort and a town where white people lived he grew very hopeful.

“When we get to that place,” he said to Ellen, “we’ll run away and hide in some white man’s house until the Indians have left.”

Much to the wonder of John, the Indians did not camp during the following night. When they reached the mouth of the Maumee they secured a large birch-bark canoe from some Indians encamped there and in this the two children and their captors traveled northward all night. Early in the morning they reached Detroit. The Indians talked to some white people on shore in a language the children could not understand, but John concluded that they spoke French because the traders had told him that many French people lived at Detroit.

To the great disappointment of John and Ellen, the Indians did not land at Detroit, but went three miles farther north before they made camp.

“We’ll run away when the Indians sleep,” John whispered to Ellen, as soon as he could see her alone a minute. “You must keep your shoes on and come quick when I call you. I can find the town. It’s straight south down the shore of the lake.”



CHAPTER III

A BOLD ATTEMPT

AFTER the Indians had eaten a hearty meal of venison and roasted pigeon, they kept the fire going for a long time and talked and laughed, until John thought they would never lie down to sleep. Now and then he could make out a word from which he learned that they were talking about the capture and how they had eluded his much-feared father, Long Gun.

And now it struck John for the first time that his father might not come. The Indians had thrown away his jacket and Ellen's apron on the southward trail to send him off in the wrong direction. If he had been deceived by that ruse, his captors could now feel perfectly safe, as indeed they did. They had gotten so far that it would be almost impossible for his father to follow them and locate them.

"That's it," he said to himself, "the apron and my jacket fooled Father and he lost a day or two hunting for us down the Ohio. When he didn't

find us, our tracks northward were so old and the Indians had gone so far that he couldn't find them. And, of course, he couldn't tell which one of the many Indian trails these fellows had taken.

"If we had only hollered! But we were too scared."

And again he lay and listened to the babble of the Indians.

"They think they've got us," he whispered to himself. "We'll fool the red thieves and Father will fix them when we get back."

Ellen was by this time fast asleep and now an uncomfortable drowsiness also threatened to overcome him. He knew what that meant. If he once fell asleep he and Ellen would not wake till morning and they might lose the last chance of escape; for they were getting farther and farther into the Indian country.

Again and again he pinched himself hard, but still he felt that the only thing he wanted in the world was to sleep for just a single minute. He wouldn't dare to get up and walk around, for that would surely cause the Indians to grow suspicious. Then he remembered what his father had said one evening when he was telling about being on the lookout for Indians all night.

“Father, how could you keep awake all night?” one of the boys had asked. “Didn’t you get awfully sleepy after you had traveled all day?”

“Yes, boys,” their father replied. “I did get sleepy, but I have found a way by which I can take my sleep in little snatches.”

“How do you do it, Father? Tell us, tell us!”

“I sit down on my knees, bend over forward, fold my arms on the ground and rest my head on my arms. If I am very tired, I go to sleep in that position, but pretty soon I fall over on my side and wake up.”

“Is it this way?” John had asked and had put himself in the described position and Ellen had promptly pushed him over and he had almost fallen into the fire.

As the story passed through his mind he took the required position and the next thing he knew he came down so hard on a root that he was wide awake at once and quickly re-wrapped himself in his blanket. And he had not been too quick; for old Mishawbo had heard a noise or noticed a movement and came over with a burning stick to make sure that the captives were still there.

“My father is dreaming with his eyes open. The white boy sleeps like a ’possum in winter.

He would never wake up," Kishawko was saying.

But old Mishawbo was suspicious. He pulled the blanket away from John's head and held the brand so close to his face that the boy had all he could do to keep up the make-believe of being asleep. However, as in well-feigned sleep he drew his arm over his eyes at the appearance of the light, the old Shawnee felt satisfied and went away muttering:

"Yes, white boy sleeps like gray squirrel in hollow tree. Will not wake till I poke him. No need tie him up."

Now John was as wide awake as if he had slept a whole night, but he realized that the Indians were still a little suspicious and that he would have to use the greatest care if he and Ellen were to make good their escape.

At last—it seemed hours and hours before it began—he heard the deep, raucous snoring of old Mishawbo. He waited a while longer to make sure that the other three Indians had also fallen asleep, then he nudged Ellen gently, whispering into her ear:

"Get up, sis, get up! We'll slip away now!"

As quietly as an owl drops off his perch the twins left their sleeping place, the boy walking

ahead, carefully picking every step and the girl following in his tracks.

The night was very dark, not a star was visible, and a thin fog was coming from the lake.

"That fog is good for us," whispered the boy. "It makes the leaves damp so they won't rustle."

Soon they struck a trail where they could walk a little faster, but they had to feel the path with their feet, for the clouds and fog made the trail in the woods almost as dark as a cave.

"John," whispered the girl after they had walked some time in silence, "I think they're following us. There's a noise behind."

They both stopped and listened.

"No, sis, that isn't Indians; it's some night animal. A 'possum or maybe a coon or skunk. The Indians won't look for us till morning."

Again they felt their way along in silence.

"We ought to see the clearing around the town pretty soon," John said a little worried. "It can't be more than three miles from our camp and it seems to me we have walked a long time."

"John, maybe we've missed the trail. What can we do if we have?"

"I don't know, sis. We have to keep going, for we can't go back."

At last when Ellen began to feel tired, and the sky grew pale behind them, the boy stopped, saying:

“Ellen, we’ve sure missed the trail in the dark. We’ve been going west all night.”

Ellen was ready to cry at first. “Will they catch us again?” she asked. “What can we do now?”

“We’ll sit down and rest a while. I wish we had something to eat. When it gets a little lighter I’ll climb a tree to see where we are.”

When he came down again he looked discouraged.

“Ellen,” he said, “we’ve been going west and a little north all night. I can’t even see the town or the water from the tree-top. Now we just have to go on till we strike a trail that leads south. Then we’ll hide near the crossing and to-night we’ll walk to Detroit.”

About noon a grouse flew up near the trail and to the great joy of the children, they found the nest contained fourteen fresh eggs. As they were very hungry, they ate some of the eggs at once and took the others along.

Toward evening they found a place where near a small lake, a trail crossed, leading southward,

and as they were very tired, they lay down under the upturned roots of an old elm on a narrow arm of the lake.

They had not been in hiding very long when they heard a slight noise behind them. John looked back and was too horrified to speak. For behind them, scarcely twenty feet away, came old Mishawbo and Kishawko.

“Let’s jump in the lake and swim across. Get on my back. I can carry you!” he whispered; and from the way he talked Ellen knew what he had seen.

They sprang to the water’s edge and the boy struck out, but the girl missed her hold and Mishawbo ran and dragged her on land.

The boy, hardly knowing what was happening, turned to look back and the next moment he dived, for a quick glance had shown him old Mishawbo in the act of firing on him.

John heard the booming of the gun under water, but the shot glanced off toward the other shore as soon as it struck the water, for shot or bullets fired very slantingly at the water will always glance off.

Scarcely had the boy reached the opposite shore when he heard his sister scream and saw

old Mishawbo threaten her with his tomahawk.

“Don’t kill her, don’t kill her,” the boy cried. “I’ll come back. If you hurt her I won’t come back and Long Gun will kill you,” and with that he returned to his captors.

Mishawbo tried to frighten him by brandishing his hatchet over him, but through his vigorous activity, the boy had lost all fear. He looked straight in the old man’s face and said:

“You hurt us and my father will get you!”

For a moment the old man acted as if he would crush the boy’s skull, then he dropped his arm, gave the lad a push with the butt of his gun, and muttered in English:

“You go back, all two. I fix you, you no run away again!”

During the night John had to sleep again between the two Indians while Ellen was allowed to find her own sleeping place, and to make sure that he could not escape, Mishawbo tied a deer hide thong around the boy’s body and laid the other end of the thong under his own blanket.

It was still dark when they arose and began their march, and before the sun was high they were again at the camp from which the twins had run away.

CHAPTER IV

AN ANXIOUS DAY

BUT John was to learn again that escaping from his captors was not to be an easy matter. For the first time he felt that the Indians seemed to possess the power of thought-reading, and that it was very difficult to outwit them in matters that lay within their range of observation and experience.

John had fully expected that the Indians, after making a meal of dried venison and roasted pigeons, would lie down to sleep a few hours, however they did not seem to think of sleeping but had formed some plan which John could not comprehend at all.

The meal over, they took the children to a large hollow log and compelled Ellen to creep into it as far as she could, and after John had been forced to follow her, they firmly closed the opening with logs and poles and went away.

When John felt sure that the Indians were gone he said: "Now we'll break out and run and

I'll tell Father to get a lot of soldiers and they'll catch these Indians and shoot them all."

But no matter how hard the boy kicked and pushed with his feet against the logs, he could not move them. Their captors had expected that he would try to break out. He tried to turn around that he might get at the logs with his hands, but in this attempt he almost got himself so twisted and doubled up that he could neither move backward nor forward, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that he was able to straighten himself out again.

Both children cried when they realized how utterly helpless they were in their hollow log prison. The boy, however, was more angry than afraid and declared again and again that if he ever got home he and Father would come back with the soldiers and kill every Indian in the country and they would make Kishawko and Mishawbo crawl into a hollow log and stay there.

The Indians seemed to remain away a long time and at last the prisoners in the hollow log fell asleep. When they awoke, their red jailers were rolling and pushing the logs from the entrance of their prison and ordered them to come out.

To the surprise of the children, the Indians had brought three horses. "I bet they stole them," John whispered to Ellen. "Just watch what'll happen to them when Father comes with the soldiers!"

It was now about the middle of the afternoon, and the Indians seemed in a great hurry to start. They tied all their blankets and other things on one horse, John and Ellen were given one to ride and the two Indians changed off riding the third, and in that way they traveled northeastward through the forest at a good rate.

At dark they camped near a small stream. Each horse was tied to a tree and allowed to pick whatever of grass or brush might be within his reach. Before the Indians lay down to sleep, John was given another proof of the thought-reading power of their captors.

"The Indians will sleep very sound to-night," he had said to himself, "because they did not sleep last night. I can stay awake because I had a long sleep in the log. As soon as I think they are asleep Ellen and I will get up. We'll each jump on a horse and I'll cut the rope of the big black so he can follow us. We'll slip away very quietly, but as soon as we are out of hearing we'll

make the horses run as fast as they can. They will take us back to their white owners who will take us to Detroit, or maybe we'll go to Detroit right away. We'll wait there till we can send word to Father to come and get us."

To his surprise John found that the Indians knew as much about horses as he did; for when it was time to roll up in their blankets, Mishawbo did something to John, which he had never done before. He tied his hands together on his back, and after tying his feet together he bound them fast to a small ironwood-tree, then he threw a blanket over the helpless boy and went away. Ellen, Mishawbo compelled to sleep between him and Kishawko and, raising his hatchet in a threatening manner, he made her understand that he would kill her if she tried to set her brother free.

John spent a very miserable night, and although he found that on a small pointed stump he could untie the rope from his hands, he was afraid to do it; for he despaired of getting Ellen away unobserved, and he knew that the savages frequently killed their captives for trifling offenses.

In the morning Ellen was told to go and untie

her brother and after the party had breakfasted on a wild turkey Kishawko had killed, they continued their journey in the same manner as on the previous day, and on the third day they arrived at the large Indian village of Saugenong near the present city of Saginaw.

When they came within a mile of the village, the Indians left their horses and John never saw them again, and for the time being, his last hope of getting back to white people vanished.

The party now continued their journey in a canoe. When they reached the large bark tepee of Mishawbo, a woman of large and ugly features came out to meet them.

"Neekeewas," said Mishawbo, "you see that I am not afraid of the whites. I have brought you two children for our boy that died." Then Neekeewas cried and hugged and kissed the children and took them into the tepee and they understood that Neekeewas was to be their mother.

On the following day the children were taken to the grave of the Indian boy, where many Indians had assembled. The friends of Mishawbo, provided with presents of maple sugar, cloth, beads, and tobacco, were seated on one side, and the others on the opposite side. Soon a lively

dance began. John and Ellen were given presents, but as they danced around to the other side, the presents were taken away from them. This dance lasted a good part of the day until all the presents were gone. Then all went home and John and Ellen had been formally adopted by Neekeewas.

Both children felt now that for the present they would have to give up all hope of escape, and so they tried to make the best of living with the Indians.

CHAPTER V

FROM SAUKS TO CHIPPEWA

IN some respects the kidnapped children found life in an Indian village not so much unlike the life they were accustomed to at home. Ellen had to help her Indian mother with all kinds of work about the wigwam. For John also Neekeewas found a good many little things to do. He had to carry in the wood she chopped for the fire and fetch water from the river or from a spring. She was kind to him, but when he was disobedient or idle, she sometimes whipped him just as she did her own children.

Many things, however, seemed at first very strange to the white children. The whole family slept in one tepee, each having a mat of rushes or a skin to lie on and a blanket for covering. John's place to sleep was right in front of the entrance, the worst place in the tepee, and Mishawbo and his sons seemed to delight in tormenting the white boy. Often as one of them entered or left the tepee, they gave him a kick, or

when one of them arose to take a drink he threw water on the sleeping boy. But the hardest thing for the growing boy was that he seldom had enough to eat; Mishawbo apparently delighted in starving him. Frequently Neekeewas and other friendly Indians secretly gave the hungry boy bits of food, but the poor lad always arose hungry, and rolled up in his blanket hungry.

After they had been a week at the village, the Indians went on a great deer hunt. John had already learned that Mishawbo was considered a bad man by the Indians themselves, and on this deer hunt he was to learn more about the bad and dangerous character of his captor.

The Indians camped near a famous hunting place where the deer for many miles came to a salt-lick, and here the hunters built a fence of brush and sticks half a mile long. In the middle this fence was broken and shaped like a driveway, leading to the salt-lick. Near this driveway the hunters concealed themselves and thus secured a good many deer without much exertion, for Indians always hunted for meat and not for sport. John was told to clear this runway of brush and dead branches which interfered with the aim of the hunters. It was now spring and the weather

grew very warm. One day, overcome by fatigue and thirst, the boy fell asleep. When he awoke he heard Neekeewas and her daughter crying near him. He tried to arise, but his head felt so sore and heavy that he was unable to stand on his feet. After the women helped him to rise he learned from signs and a few words he had learned, what had happened to him.

Mishawbo, finding him asleep, had struck him on the head with a hatchet, intending to kill him. Then leaving him for dead, he had gone and said to Neekeewas:

“Woman, the boy I brought you is no account. I have killed him and you will find him where the deer go to lick the salt.”

Neekeewas and her daughter had run at once to the unconscious boy, and by pouring water on his head and washing off the blood had revived him.

After this, John lived in constant terror of Mishawbo, and always slept in the woods outside the tepee, and fearing that the old man might try again to kill him, he changed his sleeping place every night.

Only a few weeks later when John learned that Kishawko and Mishawbo had once more gone on

the warpath against the whites, did he dare to sleep again inside the tepee.

After a month Mishawbo and his son returned and Kishawko had a bad wound in his side, which he said, he had received by falling on his own spear.

"We have been to Kentucky," old Mishawbo said to the white boy, "and have killed all your people, and I brought this hat to show you that I speak the truth."

Saying this, he pulled an old hat from under his blanket, which John recognized at once as that of his brother, and so he believed the story and gave up all hope of escaping, which was the very thing Mishawbo had intended to accomplish.

It was not until years later that John learned the facts of this expedition. Mishawbo, with a party of four men, had indeed been to Kentucky, but the attack had miscarried. One of the Indians had been shot by John's father and John's brother had wrestled with Kishawko and had wounded him badly with a knife, and the Indians had only saved their own lives by flight.

Late in the summer Mishawbo went to Mackinac where the British had called a great council of many tribes, Ottawas, Chippewas, Crees, and

Assiniboin. Here he met a kinswoman, Netnowa, who had married a Chippewa of Red River. This woman and several Ottawas and Crees returned with him to visit their friends and relatives on Lake Huron.

The visit of these people changed the whole course of life for the two white children. One day, when John returned to camp, having dragged in a small deer for a hunter, he found that his sister was gone. She had been sold to one of the visitors who had already started north with her. He learned that he himself had been sold to Netnowa and was to go north with her.

About his own fate the boy cared nothing, for he was glad to leave Mishawbo's camp; but for the loss of his sister he was inconsolable. He ran off on a trail heading northward and it took an hour before two runners could overtake him and bring him back. In vain did his new mother caress him and offer him of all the delicacies in camp; he was convulsed with grief and rage and would not be consoled.

When the boys gathered around him and called in derision: "The white boy is a squaw, he's a woman!" he sprang like a wildcat upon the nearest one and struck and kicked right and left with

such rage that his new mother and Neekeewas carried him into the tepee where he cried and sobbed himself to sleep.

The next day Netnowa and Neekeewas watched him closely. He ate nothing and walked about as if dazed, but no Indian boy came near him and none called him a woman.

Netnowa, his new mother, was as kind to him as if he had been her own son. When on the second day he started northward with her in a canoe along the shore of Lake Huron, he realized that neither his father nor any white friends could ever come after him and Ellen with any white soldiers. He had no idea who had bought Ellen and where they had taken her. He did not know where he was going and knew nothing of the people of his new mother; but he was glad to get away from Mishawbo in whose tepee he had lived in constant fear of his life.

CHAPTER VI

THE FIRST YEAR WITH THE CHIPPEWA

ON the evening of the third day the party reached the island of Mackinac, which was at that time one of the most important trading-posts in the wild country of the upper Great Lakes.

Netnowa was afraid to let her white son be seen in the village, perhaps she was also a little afraid that he might hide himself or in some way attempt to escape, so she took him to a French trader, whom she knew well and for two days the boy remained concealed in the Frenchman's cellar. After that time she allowed him to go about freely in the village. She continued to treat him with the utmost kindness and the boy was much happier than he had ever been since he had been taken from his father's home. He soon learned that his Indian mother was held in high esteem by both Indians and Whites and that she was considered one of the most influential chiefs among the Ottawas and Chippewas.

Netnowa's kindness, the perfect freedom and

the many new scenes about him made the boy forget for the first time that he was really a captive.

Quite a number of white traders lived on the island and hundreds of Indians of many different tribes came and went or camped on the island for a few days or weeks while they sold the furs they had caught the previous winter. For these they bought of the white traders the many things of American or European manufacture which had become a necessity to them, and which they took with them to their homes and hunting-grounds hundreds of miles away. There were Ottawas and Chippewas, Crees and Muskegoes, who all bartered beaver skins and other furs for traps and guns, lead and powder, hatchets, knives, awls, needles, beads and blankets and kettles, tobacco and corn, and many other things which tempted the Indians and their squaws just as the goods in plate glass show windows now tempt men and women in our great cities.

No money was used, but everything was reckoned in beaver skins. A good gun cost twenty beaver skins, and a hatchet could be bought for two or three beaver skins.

The boy could not help seeing also much of the seamy side of the fur trade and of Indian life as

it was in the wild fur country at that time. Many Indians spent all the proceeds of a year's hunting in rum and had to buy on credit the necessities for another year.

A Chippewa, who belonged to a war party that intended to go against the whites, went about threatening to kill the white boy, and John spent several days and nights in a cedar thicket near the village until the Chippewas had left the island.

At the end of a week, Netnowa's husband, Taweninne, with two of his sons, Womegew and Keewatin, came to Mackinac, and John now learned that there were good men and bad men amongst the Indians just as amongst the Whites, for Taweninne was just as kind to John as Netnowa and always called him "My son."

Of his sister, John could find no clew. Neither traders nor Indians had seen a white girl, and Netnowa could tell him nothing more than that a family of Crees who lived far to the north in Canada had taken her along. "You must forget her," she said to John, "she has a good mother and will become a Cree woman. I could not buy her because I have already two daughters and have bought a little girl whom the

Assiniboin captured in the Far West near the Great Mountains.”

And during the day, when he played with the Indian children or watched Indians and white traders arrive with large fur-laden canoes, John did forget his sister, but at night, before he fell asleep in his blanket, the large blue eyes of his little sister looked at him and then he promised himself to become a great hunter and thought: “When I know all the lakes and rivers like Netnowa and Taweninne I’ll buy a gun and much powder and many balls and then I’ll go north and find Ellen and bring her away with me. She will not become a Cree woman.”

Within a few days after the arrival of Taweninne, Netnowa finished her business at Mackinac and her family together with several other families of Chippewas, started in birch bark canoes along the eastern shore of Lake Michigan, to go to their village on Green Bay in the present state of Wisconsin. When they reached Point Detour they met a strong head-wind and ran their canoes to the head of Big Noquette Bay and made camp at a place which even to this day is called Indian Point. They found fishing in this bay so good and game and game-birds so abundant, that

they remained in this camp nearly all summer.

As John and several Indian boys roamed about in the woods back of the camp they found a small nesting-place of passenger pigeons and endeavored in vain to shoot some with their small bows and arrows.

When John saw that he would lose all his arrows without bagging any pigeons, he ran home and said to Taweninne: "My father, I have found some big pigeons and if I only had a gun I could shoot some and bring home good meat for my brothers and sisters."

"It is time," remarked Netnowa, when she heard this, "that our son learn to shoot and become a hunter."

Taweninne had an old horse-pistol which he gave to John after it had been loaded with a charge of shot.

"My son," he said, "if you bring home some pigeons you shall have a better gun so that you may learn to hunt."

John, who up to this time had never fired a gun, ran back into the woods and soon found a pigeon. He held the old pistol close to his face and aiming it carefully at the bird, he fired. At the discharge of the old piece, he was sent sprawl-

ing into the bushes feeling as if he had been hit in the face and on the forehead by a club. As soon as he recovered, he looked for the pigeon and found it lying dead under its perch. After he had found the pistol in a wild gooseberry bush he ran home with great joy, in one hand carrying the horse-pistol and with the other holding up the dead pigeon, notwithstanding that his face and forehead were bleeding and that in his right ear he felt a buzzing as if a bumblebee had crawled into it.

When the boy rushed into camp with his head and face bleeding and swollen from the kick of the pistol, Taweninne and Netnowa laughed aloud, but Netnowa at once washed his face and bandaged his head. During the afternoon John killed three more pigeons with the old pistol, but he was careful to grasp the treacherous weapon firmly with both hands and hold it away from his face. Netnowa was so well pleased with the work of her white son that next day she bought him a gun from one of the other Indian families, paying for it with three tanned deerskins.

From now on John spent a good deal of his time in hunting, and as his Indian parents were as kind to him as his own father and mother had

been in Kentucky, he was quite happy and began to like the Indian way of living. By securing all kinds of small game such as grouse and ducks, rabbits and gray squirrels, the boy added a considerable share to the food of the family. He did not go fishing because the Chippewas considered that to be the work of women, and Netnowa and her daughters were skillful in the use of nets and lines. When the small wild fruits of the forest began to ripen, strawberries, gooseberries, raspberries, and Juneberries added variety to the fare of the Indians, so that with the fish the women caught, the small game secured by the boy hunter and the deer brought in by Taweninne, the season was one of joy and abundance, and the Indians remained at their camp until after the blueberry season.

When the nights grew cool and the birches began to show the first tints of yellow, they broke camp and paddled along the shore to the mouth of the Menominee River. For two days they proceeded up this stream, then they left their canoes at the foot of some rapids and traveled two days farther up the stream, where they made their winter camp.

CHAPTER VII

WINTER IN A CHIPPEWA CAMP

THE people who were with Netnowa had camped at this spot several winters. Each family now moved into its winter house, but all the houses needed to be put in shape for winter.

Could one have seen this Chippewa town, it would have appeared like a village of bark cabins built by a troop of happy boy campers. Some of the pieces of bark of which the sides and roof of the camps were built, had decayed, through others the squirrels and chipmunks had cut holes, and all these had to be replaced by new slabs which John and Netnowa carefully tied in place with strings of wood fiber. The boy liked to help his mother with this work, because she was nearly always in good humor and could tell many stories, serious and funny, of Indian life and history, for she had traveled much and had seen many tribes. Some of the poles on the sides and on the roof also had to be replaced because the big white worms, which one can hear on a still night, bor-

ing in logs and poles, had cut many tunnels in them and the little red-capped wood-peckers had drilled holes through them so they were not strong enough to withstand the force of the wind and the weight of the snow.

When Netnowa had finished putting her house in good shape, many other things had to be done. She needed cat-tail leaves to make mats, for the bare floor was too cold and damp to sit on, and John waded into the swamp and cut big armfuls of the longest leaves which his mother wove skillfully into soft mats. After he had gathered enough cat-tail leaves and rushes he had to make a frame for drying the wild rice which his sisters were gathering in a marsh a mile away.

When the ice formed on the lakes and the first white snowflakes fell on the brownish-green cedars Netnowa's camp was in better shape than that of any other woman in camp. All skin rugs and all blankets were repaired, there were plenty of birch-bark dishes for her large family and dozens of moccasins for her husband and her sons to wear, when they would go hunting deer or trapping beavers. Taweninne had three fat deer hung up in a tree behind the camp, his daughters had filled two large birch-bark tubs with rice and

had gathered many skin bags full of dried berries and Netnowa had caught in her net more than five hundred pike and bass and other fish. For keeping these Keewatin had built a brush camp, where the sun could not spoil them by thawing them and where the hungry dogs could not steal them.

When the squaws came to visit Netnowa they said: "Our sister Netnowa has always plenty of food and plenty of dry wood in her onagehogamey. She is the best and happiest wife in the whole village. Her husband never gets drunk and never beats her and she has a white son who will not put her away when she gets too old to work for him"; and several young women, each of whom expected soon to have an onagehogamey of her own, often came to see how Netnowa did things.

John was now almost fourteen years old and one day, when Netnowa needed no more help about the onagehogamey, Taweninne said to him:

"My son, it is now time that you should earn some money and help me and Womegew and Keewatin to support our family, because next spring, when we go again to visit the traders at Mackinac, we shall want to buy many things.

“You need a new gun and we must have blankets and powder and balls, and Netnowa and the girls need hatchets and knives and some kettles and many other things, for which the traders will ask much money.”

The only way in which an Indian in that region and at that time could earn any money was by catching furs. In fact, Taweninne did not really use the word money, but told John that he ought to go and catch some fur-bearing animals, because the Indians bought almost everything with furs. The most valuable fur was that of the beaver, but marten, fisher, and mink were also much hunted. Sometimes the Indians also sold dried venison of deer and moose and the Western Indians sometimes had pemmican, which is dried buffalo meat preserved in tallow, to sell to the traders. Corn and wild rice were also in demand among the traders, but the Northern Indians raised very little corn and seldom gathered more wild rice than they needed for their own use.

John was very glad to think that his Indian father considered him now almost a young man and said: “My father, I will go to-morrow and begin to make traps, if I can find a good place to hunt for marten or beaver.”

“You cannot catch beaver, my son,” Taweninne told him, “because you have no iron traps and all the beaver streams that are not too far away have been taken by the men of our village.

“But if you will walk an hour up the river you will see a creek join the river from the direction where the sun sets. It is called Creek of the Round Rocks because the water runs so swiftly over many stones that in many places no ice ever covers it. On this creek I have seen many tracks of marten and some of Essikan, the little brother of Makwah, the bear, who always washes his food before he eats it. But Essikan is asleep now in the big hollow trees and you will not see his tracks again till the sugar sap begins to flow.

“Go to the creek and make traps for Wabistan, the marten. No man or boy has taken this creek and all the furs you can catch shall be yours and you may sell them next summer to the white traders at Mackinac.”

Next morning John was one of the first to leave camp. He found the creek and worked hard all day. The traps were built on the principle of a deadfall somewhat like the old-fashioned mouse-trap, which consists of a brick and small sticks making a figure-4. For each trap he had to cut

and trim several small logs and as this was his first attempt to make traps it was hard and slow work and it took him much time to pick out good places. When the sun had sunk behind the tops of the tall maples and spruces, he was very tired and hungry and was six miles from home.

On the following day he caught one marten and made four more traps. Some young men, who had passed by his trail, laughed at him when they reached camp and said:

“The white son of Netnowa is a very poor hunter. Old grandmother, Menogeeshig, the oldest squaw in the village, could make more traps than he. The martens and the coons will laugh at him, for he is only good for snaring rabbits.”

The next morning Taweninne said: “My son, the young men must no longer make fun of you. I shall go with you and show you how to make traps.”

That day John and his father made thirty traps, and after that John caught as many marten as any young man in the village, and the young Indians no longer laughed at him.

This winter everything went well at the Chipewa village. No sickness broke out and the Indians did not suffer from shortage of food as they

nearly always did in winter, and they knew that their enemies, the Sioux or Dakotahs, were far away in their own winter camps. The children were plump and happy, the men went out regularly to hunt and trap, and the women set their nets in the river till the ice grew very thick and were as happy and content with their work in the bark cabins as their white sisters ever are on the farms and in towns.

Every afternoon the women went out with their small axes to cut wood for the night. This work they performed even in the coldest and most stormy weather, for to cut wood ahead for several days would have been an unheard-of departure from ancient customs. To a white woman, this work would have seemed a great hardship, but the Indian women looked upon it as something natural in the division of labor between themselves and the men, and a squaw who had allowed her husband to cut the family wood would have lost all standing among her sisters, just as might a white woman who would let her husband cook the meals and sew dresses for the baby.

Nor were the women at all lonesome, in fact they had far more sociability than the white women on the frontier of those days. The onage-

hogameys all stood within a rod or two of each other, and all day the squaws visited back and forth to exchange the gossip of the village and to laugh at the many little accidents of their hunting and trapping husbands and sons and at the funny mishaps of their children. And after dark, when the hunters were coming home, a streak of light and a curl of smoke arose over the roof of every wigwam; where liberal rations of venison, fish, or grouse were boiling in the kettles hung over the fire.

Most of the families lived happily and contentedly, this was especially true of Netnowa and Taweninne and their children, but in some wigwams the women were nags and scolds, and when the hunter husbands lost their patience, the scolding women received a sound beating, which was, however, only following the custom of their fathers.

Thus the winter passed and welcome signs of spring were seen and heard in nature. After a three days' thaw, small flocks of crows were seen and heard along the shore of the frozen lake, blue-jays and nuthatches began to call in the timber, and the bold little chickadees no longer came to

look for worms and insects, where the women cut their wood.

And a few days later the small boys came running into camp and told that the sap was running and the women all made ready for the great annual festival of moving to the sugar camp.

For a festival it was indeed. It marked the end of winter, when they were often exposed to starvation and when they were often cold and uncomfortable; for an Indian tepee or bark house with a little open fire and a hole in the roof is never really warm like a white man's house or like a log cabin with a stove in it.

For several days the squaws put everything in readiness. Then one fine warm morning the whole settlement started for the sugar woods. The children danced with joy as they took up their small bundles and the dogs yelped and barked with excitement. Even the squaws were happy, although each of them carried a heavy load, even after the men had taken the heavy iron pots and kettles and other heavy things. But moving camp was the work of the women, for most of the men had gone ahead to hunt within a few miles of the sugar camp, and if they carried any

heavy burdens, they could not travel fast enough and would have no game in camp when the women and children arrived in the evening.

At the sugar bush, about fifteen miles from their winter camp, the Indians had a permanent spring camp. So when the women arrived it took them only a few hours to put all the wigwams in order, and when the first hunters began to arrive with deer and small game the women had already cut their evening wood and had fires burning in the tepees.

For a month they all stayed in the sugar bush. The women and boys collected the sap in birch-bark vessels and carried it to a large bark house, where the sap was boiled and sugared off in iron kettles and made into cakes or mococks. The men hunted and cut wood for the fire under the kettles. So much wood was needed for boiling down the sap that it was considered men's work to cut the fuel for this purpose.

During this time, many of the Indians, especially the children, lived almost entirely on maple sugar, and it was well that they were so fond of it, for game was scarce in this country and although the hunters roamed many miles from

home, they brought but little meat to camp.

When the buds began to swell, the sap ceased flowing and the Indians all started for Mackinac to sell furs and mococks of sugar to the traders. Their canoes were filled with bales of fur and mococks of maple sugar that weighed about fifty pounds each.

Netnowa declared that she and her family would not return to Green Bay, but would go on to Red River to visit the relatives of her husband whom she had not seen for five years. She had also heard that there were still many beavers in the Red River country while near their camp at Green Bay the beavers had become scarce.

“My sons,” she said, “you are now almost grown up and can hunt and trap like men. We are a large family and need so many things that we must go where you can catch more furs or we shall always remain poor.”

John heard with joy of his mother’s plans.

“At Mackinac,” he thought, “we shall meet many Indians and traders and I shall ask them if they know of a white girl living with the Chippewas or the Crees or the Assiniboins. And if they do not know, I shall ask the traders and Indians along our route on Rainy River. Perhaps

I shall even meet Ellen at Mackinac. If I do, I shall tell her to run away and hide in the woods until we start for Red River and then we will take her along."

CHAPTER VIII

A MOTHER'S SORROW

THERE came to Mackinac this spring an unusually large number of Indians, voyageurs, and traders.

So large was the number of Indians and so long did many of them prolong their stay that food became scarce, although the women fished diligently in the lake. The white people living permanently on the island were either traders or Canadian voyageurs, men who went on long hard journeys for the traders, to bring in the furs from distant posts.

Few people on the island raised more corn and other crops than they needed, and as the island contains only about three square miles, they raised but little stock. Some of the voyageurs were married to Indian women and their families lived like Indians. The wives of some of the traders and military officers had their flower gardens and planted some of those lilacs which have grown into regular trees and of which the village

of Mackinac is proud to this day; but of food, the island produced very little.

A thrifty Jesuit father had a large ox which had been employed many seasons in hauling timber, stone and firewood. The holy father desired very much some ready money to use on a contemplated journey to his native country of France. So he had the old ox killed and sold his meat for an equal weight of beaver skins.

“In Paris,” he remarked, “I can sell eight hundred pounds of beaver for \$30,000. Ah, may be, I will get \$40,000 if I am lucky. Then I buy a little farm for each of my brothers and sisters and I’ll have a nice little sum left to give to the church and the brethren at Montreal.”

But the liveliest demand existed for hominy. The traders had found that a bushel of hominy and two pounds of suet of deer, moose, or beef was a sufficient ration to last a voyageur a month, and as no other food weighed so little and took up so little room in the canoe, hominy and suet had become the standard ration for the voyageurs. So nourishing was this food that on a quart a day the voyageurs could perform the hardest labor of paddling long stretches and of carrying canoes and heavy packs over rough portages. The In-

dian hunters and runners also provided themselves with a pouch of hominy if they had to go on long trips where they had no time to hunt or where they knew game would be scarce.

Most of the hominy came from the French settlements in Canada. Several of the traders who sent their men on long journeys to Lake Superior, to Rainy River, to Lake Winnipeg and to the tributaries of the Mississippi needed hundreds of bushels of this staple food, and this spring the price rose to seven and even to eight dollars a bushel, which meant that it took from ten to twenty beaver skins to pay for one bushel of hominy.

John was not disappointed in his hope of finding many Indians and voyageurs at the island, but however diligently he inquired about his sister, neither voyageurs nor Indians had seen a white girl or knew anything about her. Evidently the Indians that bought her had not stopped with her at Mackinac and had never taken her to the island.

The boy again saw much of the misery of life among the Indians and in the fur country. All the traders sold rum to the Indians or gave it to them as presents, and scenes of drunken de-

bauchery, quarrels, and even murders resulted almost daily. The traders could not stop the abuse on account of the competition among themselves, and as no Indian chief had any real authority over his village or tribe, the chiefs were equally powerless to stop it.

Often the women hid all firearms and knives when the men began to drink, but nevertheless bitter quarrels broke out frequently. The degradation of the Canadian Indians through liquor did not stop until about 1820 when the Hudson Bay Company obtained a monopoly of the fur trade in Canada, and it was at a much later date that the United States excluded all liquor from Indian reservations.

Taweninne, one day, tried to separate two fighting Indians. While doing this he accidentally tore the blanket of one of them. This made the half-drunken man so angry that he picked up a large stone and threw it at the head of Taweninne, felling him to the ground and leaving him for dead.

Netnowa was so anxious to get away from all the horror and confusion that a few days later, when Taweninne had partly recovered, she started with her family for Grand Portage on

the north shore of Lake Superior in the present state of Minnesota. From there she intended to go on to Red River by way of Rainy River and Lake of the Woods. As a sail-boat started at the same time from the Sault of Ste. Marie for Grand Portage, she put all the baggage of the family on this boat, while she and her family started for the same place in two canoes. The distance is over two hundred miles in a straight line, but in their frail bark canoes the Indians could not venture out into the open lake, but had to creep along the north shore, which made the journey more than three hundred miles long. The weather was, however, so favorable without any wind that they made the trip in five days and reached Grand Portage before the sail-boat arrived. Netnowa herself was very skillful with the paddle, but Taweninne was still suffering from his injury and was not able to do much work.

When the boat arrived, Keewatin, jumping into the dark hold badly injured his knee, which swelled so much and became so painful that he was hardly able to travel. When the family reached a small lake called by the Indians Moon-sug Saguhegun, about twenty miles from Grand Portage, both Tawenninne and Keewatin were too

sick to go any farther and the family camped on this lake where Netnowa could net enough fish to keep her family from starving.

On the fifth day after their arrival at Moose Lake, Taweninne called his sons to him and said: "My sons, I am now dying. I had hoped to live until you were all grown up, but now I must leave you all young and poor and Keewatin very sick. You, my son, Womegew, and you my white son, Nunduwah, must learn to hunt and take care of your mother and of your sisters until they are married, and when your mother gets old, you must not put her away. You must not kill the man who killed me, for he has many friends and they would kill you all, and he did not mean to kill me."

Soon after he had spoken in this way he ceased to breathe.

A few days later Keewatin also died.

The traders at Grand Portage were so much touched by the afflictions of Netnowa that they had both bodies taken to the trading post and buried them in the White Man's burying ground, where they rest from their long wanderings even to this day. Netnowa and her daughters cried much over the loss of their dead. Around the

graves they built a small stockade, and on the graves they placed two kettles, some meat, wild rice, and tobacco; according to the custom of Netnowa's people.

CHAPTER IX

INDIAN ORPHANS

By this time John spoke the Chippewa language fluently and he had also picked up a good many French words and phrases from the traders. He was also well acquainted with the country and with the conditions of life in the woods and amongst Indians and traders, so that it would have been an easy matter for him to escape from the Indians and make his way to the white settlements. But now that the chances of escape were all in his favor, he never made the attempt.

If formerly, fear of the Indians and a lack of knowledge of the land, of lakes and rivers and canoe routes had kept him among the Indians, he now remained among them of his own free will for very different reasons.

He believed at this time that his parents and all his brothers and sisters had been killed and he did not care to go and live as a poor orphan among white strangers. He had grown to like the Indian way of living and had become as much

attached to Netnowa as if she had been his real mother, and the thought of leaving his kind Indian mother and his Indian friends, who began to esteem him as an able young hunter, for cold-hearted white strangers was repellent to him. The English language he felt he had almost forgotten. Since he had been among the Chippewa he had not heard even a broken word of English and with the exception of a few white women at Mackinac he had not seen a white woman, since he last saw his mother in Kentucky. He thought in Chippewa and dreamed in Chippewa. Many and many a time as he lay wrapt in his blanket during the long winter nights did the dream spirits bring to him scenes and stories from the forests of the Chippewa. He saw the wonderful beaver people build their dams and lodges, he saw them sit around the white-barked poplars, cutting, cutting, cutting until they started to jump out of the way of the falling tree, he dreamed of tracking marten and bear and deer. The white man's life and land seemed to have been erased from his mind, only his sister he often saw in his dreams. But she was dressed like an Indian girl. She lived so far to the north that the trees were so small that a man could bend them and she al-

ways looked puzzled and couldn't understand when he told her in Chippewa to come away and become Netnowa's daughter. When he awoke after these dreams he half believed that the spirit of Ellen had actually looked into his tepee, for he was unconsciously absorbing the superstitions and beliefs of the Chippewas.

And Ellen was the strongest reason why he was now willing to remain indefinitely among the Indians. As to where she was and how he might find her, on those points he had as yet only the vaguest idea. But in the same degree that he began to feel detached from the white people in general, his attachment to his lost sister grew. On this point also he was becoming like the Indians, who were so strongly attached to their kinsfolk that they would journey laboriously half-way across the continent to visit them and would carry the feelings of kinship and friendship, just like the feelings of hatred and revenge, through a lifetime and even into the second and third generation.

It was now too late in the season to start for Red River, but Netnowa fully intended to carry out her plan of going there in spring. She even talked of going on up the Assiniboin, five hundred

miles westward where some kinsmen of hers were now living whom she had not seen since she was a growing girl at Lake Huron.

An Indian hunter has much time to think, to peer ahead into the future and back into the past.

Many a time when John was watching for deer or beaver through the long hours of an afternoon the thought came to him that Ellen might have become Indian like himself. She might even marry an Indian when she was grown up, and then she would never leave the Crees or whatever people she might be living with. John's father used to tell such a story about a New England girl of long ago.

No, Ellen was not going to marry a squatty Cree or a dirty Assiniboin, a Stoneboiler! If she ever married an Indian it must be a tall, brave Chippewa, one who didn't get drunk and didn't beat his wife. But he must be a brave warrior who had fought and killed some of the treacherous Sioux. He must be a good hunter and trapper so his family would have many warm blankets and moccasins and buckskin leggins and other clothing.

And then he would sometimes spring up from

his seat on a mossy log and drive his hatchet deep into it and say aloud: "*Kahween, uneshah goo!* No, it is nonsense! Ellen shall not marry any Indian. I will be a great hunter and a warrior. I shall go on the warpath against the Sioux, the treacherous Roasters, and I shall not fear the Crees nor the Assiniboins, the poor Stoneboilers. I shall be rich and the traders will owe me for many skins of beaver and otter and marten. Then Ellen and I will be white people again and we shall live at Mackinac or Detroit, and Netnowa, when she is old shall live with us and she will not have to cut wood or dress deerskins and make mats and fish in the lake. *Nenuhwind ezhechega!* That's what we shall do! And I will go and kill Mishawbo and Kishawko who killed my father and mother. I will!"

Thus the boy thought and spoke many times as he watched in the weird solitude near a great beaver pond, where the moose had made a trail across the stream just below the beaver dam and where the beaver people floated many poplar poles to their houses.

As the winter advanced and the forest trees cracked with cold, game grew scarce near Netnowa's camp and the two boys, John, about six-

teen years old, and his Indian brother, Womegew, about a year older, who were now the only supporters of the family, had to hunt at great distances from camp.

The trail to the best hunting grounds led across a very rapid river, where the ice was never quite safe. As the two boys crossed the river on their way home after a long but unsuccessful hunt, both broke through and barely saved their lives by throwing themselves forward on the thin ice and crawling like seals over the dangerous place. But in doing this their moccasins and leggins and other clothing became soaked and, as the day was intensely cold, their moccasins and clothing froze at once as stiff as dry rawhide and walking became impossible, and it was even extremely difficult to extricate themselves from their snowshoes.

In those days an Indian hunter always carried a flint, steel, and some dry spunkwood or tinder for making fire. When the lads struggled out of the river their spunkwood became soaked and it was impossible for them to make a fire. When they found themselves in this calamity, the Indian boy was ready to give up.

“I am ready to die,” he said. “We have eaten

nothing for two days and we cannot walk to our camp which is a whole night's journey off. So we must die here." And saying so he lay down on a hillside where the wind had blown away the snow.

But the white boy was not willing to die. He walked about as best he could so as to keep his hands and feet from freezing. After awhile he found some very dry rotten wood and with great difficulty he got a fire started before his hands grew too numb. But to gather firewood they found almost impossible. So they built just a small fire over which they squatted close and warmed their hands until they could gather larger pieces of wood for a good warm fire. Then they took off their moccasins and leggins, wrung and squeezed the water out of them, and hung them up on sticks to dry, while they sat close to the fire to warm their numb and shivering bodies. As soon as their moccasins and leggins were dry enough, they put them on again and started for camp just as it was growing dark.

They were now so weak from hunger and exhaustion and cold that they could only walk very slowly. Again and again Womegew said that he could go no farther and must sit down to rest and

that his eyes were too tired to remain open any longer.

But John urged and pushed him on.

“My brother,” he said, “you must not sit down. If you sit down you will fall asleep and when the sun rises your flesh will be as hard as wood and Kikwaakes, the wolverine, will eat it and Maheengun, the gray wolf, will crush your bones. Go on, go on, Netnowa must not cry for another of her sons!”

And they staggered on in silence. The big trees cracked with the frost, an owl hooted in a spruce swamp. Mile after mile they dragged themselves along without speaking a word. Then a lone wolf howled among the tall pines on a hillside.

“There’s Maheengun!” John spoke with a feeble voice. He felt a dull humming in his head and had scarce breath enough to keep going. “Hear, my brother!” he repeated almost in a whisper, “there’s the voice of Maheengun. He will follow our track. We must not stop!”

And again they stumbled on in silence, while the gray wolf followed cautiously at a distance. They did not turn around at him, but they knew he was following. The stars began to fade, and

still the exhausted lads dragged themselves forward, more and more slowly. John's legs began to lose feeling and many times he almost fell as he stumbled over sticks and roots on the trail. Womegew was lagging behind as if he were walking in a dream.

Once John stopped and looked back. "Come, my brother," he said, "Maheengun is following. Do not fall!"

And then a woman came around a bend in the trail and the lads sank exhausted on the snow against a big pine.

It was Netnowa who had brought them dry mocasins and leggins and a little beaver meat and wild rice, half of all the food she had left.

When the boys had not reached home at the usual time, she knew that they had broken through the ice and she had started at once and walked all night to meet them.

"It is good, my mother, that you have come," said John, "we were getting very tired and the gray wolf was following our trail!" And to himself he added: "I can never leave her. She is my real mother now!"

After the boys had eaten and slept for several hours at a warm fire, which their mother kept re-

plenished, she called them in the soft Chippewa tongue:

“My sons,” she said, “you must now take up your blankets so that we may reach home before night again overtakes us. The clouds are coming from the land of the Assiniboina, it will be very dark to-night and I can feel that the snow will begin to fall before the sun goes down.”

The lads were so much refreshed by food and sleep that they followed their mother at a good speed. They could have nothing to eat before they reached their mother’s lodge, but to go all day without eating was a common thing with Indian hunters and trappers and the boys did not think this a great hardship. Both were accustomed to the Indian way of living, to eat much when food was plentiful, and to get along on very little when food was scarce. Three regular daily meals were not known in Indian wigwams. The members of an Indian family ate when they were hungry, that is, if there was anything to eat, and the hunters ate when they came home in the evening.

When Netnowa and her two sons approached their wigwam, they saw a sheaf of light over it, which showed that the two daughters had cut

wood and built a fire, and Netnowa and the boys knew that a kettle with beaver meat and wild rice was simmering over the fire.

The Indian girls were as happy as any white girls would have been at the return of the boys, for they had lived in great fear that the boys had either frozen to death or had been drowned in the river. They handed the boys dry moccasins and leggins, put more dry wood on the fire and, with happy faces, they watched the lads as they sat on their mats and enjoyed the meat and the hot broth after their escape from death in the wild forest and in the icy river.

As soon as the lads had eaten their meat and rice, an irresistible drowsiness overcame them in the warm tepee and they wrapped themselves in their blankets and, lying down with their feet to the fire, they fell asleep.

In the forest a fresh wind had sprung up and the snow was coming down in dense masses of minute white crystals. Above the pines and spruces the dense cloud of fine snow moved straight toward the southeast, but among the boughs it swirled gently here and there, and at last fell to the ground and on the bark roof of the tepee with a soft whispering sound just audi-

ble to the acute sense of the Indian women, who still sat in silence around the fire. Many and many a tiny flake, it is true, sifted in through the smoke hole in the tepee and for a moment glistened like a diamond on the black hair of Netnowa or the two young girls or melted away on their warm brown faces. But such trifles were not felt as a discomfort by a people who were accustomed to endure so much real hardship and to laugh at discomforts which would cause real suffering to white people. To a white person an Indian tepee is never really warm in winter, but the Indians felt no discomfort except in intensely cold weather. Their only real suffering was from hunger; and almost every winter hunger and even starvation hovered like an evil spirit over every Indian camp.

Sometimes the game in the vicinity was all killed by too many families camping in one place, sometimes the moose, their chief support, migrated to other feeding grounds and for the Indians to move camp in winter was a difficult undertaking.

CHAPTER X

HOW THE INDIANS HELPED THE POOR

ON the day after Netnowa and the boys returned to camp it still snowed so hard that Netnowa would not let the boys go hunting.

“My sons,” she said, “you are still very tired. While the snow is coming down you cannot track any game and you might lose your way in the forest where nobody can find you. Too little food has made you weak, and you must not go on a hunt till this storm has passed over. It would be better that we should all starve together than that you should be lost. Since Taweninne and Kee-watin have gone away, you are the only men left in my family, and if we can but live through this winter you will be strong and will become hunters who can always find game like your father, Taweninne.”

When the storm ceased the weather grew very cold, and the boys in their weakened condition could only risk going on short hunting trips, and, as the season advanced, game of all kinds grew more and more scarce.

Occasionally one of them snared or shot a rabbit or killed a chattering red squirrel with an arrow. From another trip one came home with a grouse or a spruce-hen, which he had killed with a stick; but so poor was the hunting that if each boy had himself eaten all the game he killed, he would still have been hungry.

One evening after each had eaten only a morsel of food, John said to Netnowa:

“My mother, I have hunted all day and have seen only one rabbit. The moose have all left the country and it is now too late for caribou to come here this winter. We have caught all the beavers, and the bears are asleep in their dens where we cannot find them. Many rabbits died of the great sickness last fall and others the lynx and the wolves and the great owls have eaten. When the rabbits were gone the lynx hunted the grouse and the fool hen, and now the only animal we can find here is the little red squirrel who sits on the boughs and scolds at the hunters in a language we do not understand.

“My mother, I think we should move to another place, for my brother and I shall soon be too weak to hunt and too weak to move and then we shall all starve.”

“Wait a few days, my sons,” Netnowa replied, “to-night I shall pray to the Great Spirit and if he does not show me any game then we will move to a point two days’ travel to the West. From there it is only a short measure to a dense swamp of tamaracks and cedars where Taweninne found many moose.”

That night when the four young people of the family were asleep in their blankets, their mother left the tepee, warmly dressed for spending a night in the forest. As the night grew cold, and as one or the other of the young people awoke and replenished the fire, they saw that Netnowa was not in her usual place. Her absence, however, caused no uneasiness, for several times when her family faced a critical situation she had gone away in the evening to pray to the Great Spirit, and the advice she had given on her return had always proved wise by subsequent events. Nor were her children alarmed for her safety on account of the cold, for in enduring the hardships of hunger and cold and long, burdensome journeys, she had often proved herself superior to the strongest men.

But when daylight came and Netnowa had not returned, the girls grew uneasy and said: “Our

mother has fallen asleep in the forest and you must go and find her before the spirit leaves her body, for if she dies we shall not know what to do and we shall all die before the sap begins to drip from enahatig, the sugar tree."

But the boys would not go till noon. "Our mother is a wise woman," they said, "and knows more about the woods and the weather than the best hunters. She will not go to sleep in the forest, but if she has not returned when the sun is high, we shall go and look for her trail."

When the sun was two hours high, Netnowa returned, and after she had drunk some hot broth and eaten a morsel of rabbit meat, she sat down near the fire and told her children what to do:

"My sons, you shall go out among the pines and the spruces to-day and to-morrow, and when you hear the red Ahjiduhmo scold you from a bough, or when you find him cutting the small seeds from the spruce cones, you shall shoot him with an arrow, for you must save the traders' powder and lead for the big moose and the caribou and for the bear who will wake up when the sugar sap begins to flow.

"To-day and to-morrow we shall eat the meat which covers the little bones of Ahjiduhmo. On

the third day the Great Spirit will send to our camp a man who carries a heavy load of moose meat which will fill our kettles many times, and we shall eat and grow strong again.”

On the third day toward evening a Muskeego Indian, carrying a heavy load of moose meat, came to Netnowa's camp, just as she had predicted and her sons and daughters were more than ever convinced of her supernatural powers. The Great Spirit, the Indian said, had given him plenty of game all winter and as Netnowa's family had no man to hunt for big game, he had thought that they must be in want of meat.

Netnowa immediately roasted some of the meat over the fire and gave each of her children a small piece. The boys who had been ravenously hungry for a month, wanted more, but she would not allow them to eat all they wanted before the evening of the next day.

When they all had regained their strength, the Muskeego took Netnowa and her family to his camp, a two-days' journey to the west. This was near the place where Taweninne had several times made his camp, and here they found plenty of game and suffered no more from hunger. In this manner the Indians always helped those who had

lost their natural supporters, and the families who had received such help rendered friendly service to the children and grandchildren of their benefactors.

When spring arrived, the game became exhausted near the Muskeego's camp, and he and some friends decided to move to Isle Royale, the largest island in Lake Superior.

"On this island," said the Muskeego, "are large lakes with many fish in them, and game is always plentiful on the island because the passage to it in canoes is long and dangerous and not many Indians go there.

"We shall start before the sun rises on a day when the wind and the waves are asleep, and there I believe we shall find much game and many fish and other food, enough for ourselves and the family of Netnowa."

They did as the Indian had planned, and starting very early on a quiet day, they reached the island in the afternoon. In the shallow water near the many rocky points, they speared some sturgeon and on the rocks and small islets around the main island, they found so many eggs of gulls that they had food in abundance. They built their camp on the shore of Lake Siskiwit, the largest

lake on the island. Into this lake run several small streams on which beaver and otter and other game was very abundant.

On the high rocky ridges surrounding this lake they found plenty of caribou, and they stayed at this camp until the middle of summer.

When they were ready to leave the island, they again started very early in the morning on a quiet day. When all the canoes,—there were eight of them,—had passed a few rods from land, they stopped and the Muskeego chief offered prayer to the Great Spirit: “You have made this lake,” he prayed in a deep earnest voice, “and you have made the Indians. Look now friendly upon us and let the waves remain asleep while we pass from this great island to the country of the Chipewewa!”

Then the leader in each canoe threw some tobacco into the lake and, as the canoes started, the chief began to chant a song to the Great Spirit and the men paddled as hard as they could. The lake remained quiet and, before nightfall, all the canoes reached Grand Portage, the Muskeegoes with Netnowa's family having lived on the great island for nearly three months.

CHAPTER XI

A DANGEROUS CROSSING

AT Grand Portage Netnowa heard some bad news from the traders. A married daughter of hers, living at Red River, had recently been left a widow, her husband having been killed in a drunken brawl among the Indians.

“Your daughter,” the travelers told her, “wishes you to come to Red River as soon as possible. She has no canoe and is too poor to make the long journey with her two little girls, and she wishes very much to see you again before your hair grows all white.”

The Muskeegoes, with whom they had lived on Isle Royale, helped Netnowa to carry her large canoe and baggage over the long carrying-place on the Pigeon River. From this point Netnowa and her two sons and daughters started westward. Small game was now quite abundant, and the women fished and picked berries so the family did not suffer from want of food.

When the leaves began to turn, they came to

the Lake of the Sand Hills, which is called by the whites, Lake of the Woods. As they crossed the southwestern part of this vast lake they ran into a dangerous squall. Old Netnowa managed the canoe, Womegew helped to paddle, and John was ordered with a large kettle to dip out the water which the waves dashed into the boat, and it was only by the greatest exertion of all three that the canoe was saved from being swamped and the whole party from being drowned.

They followed the outlet from Lake of the Woods to Lake Winnipeg, the Lake of Muddy Water, as the Chippewa name signifies. Lake Winnipeg receives much fine silt, brought from the great prairies by the Red River, the Assiniboine and the great Saskatchewan; and the Chippewa hunters coming from the clear blue waters of Lake Superior called this great lake the Lake of Muddy Water. The Winnipeg River has many carrying places, and as the party had to find food for five people by hunting and fishing, they could not travel fast, and when they arrived at the Lake of Muddy Water the leaves of the birches were all yellow and the low maples studded the marshy forests like flaring red garnets.

In many ways John and Womegew were now

quite manly, but they often caused their mother not a little worry by their boyish carelessness and foolhardiness.

One act of carelessness nearly cost them the loss of much valuable property and might have cost the boys their lives if Netnowa, who was still much superior in woodcraft and on dangerous waters, had not come to their rescue.

Netnowa had bought a second small canoe of a trader and the boys had been out in it trying to spear some fish. This canoe containing net, guns, fish-spears and traps, and other property very valuable to a poor Indian family, they had carelessly left on the beach in very shallow water, although Netnowa had often told them:

“My sons, you should always lift your canoe entirely out of the water and leave it on high land. Otherwise the wind may become strong and the waves may rise, while your eyes are not looking, and when you go to travel again in your canoe, you will not find it.”

On this occasion they forgot about the canoe while they cooked and ate the fish they had speared. Just as the sun was setting beyond the big lake John saw to his horror, the canoe with all their most valuable property three miles off

shore and drifting rapidly away before a fresh easterly breeze.

“Oh, Mother, Mother!” he called out, “our canoe is sailing across the big Muddy Water, my brother and I forgot to carry it up on the sand!”

Netnowa at once comprehended the danger. If this canoe were lost they were beggars and would have to depend entirely on their friends; for they would have no implements for hunting, fishing, and trapping.

“My sons!” she cried, “come with me, quick! We must overtake that canoe, we cannot meet our friends as helpless beggars.”

They carried their large canoe into the water and rapidly paddled after the derelict craft. It was all the sharp eyes of Netnowa could do, to follow the small craft in the falling darkness. When after an hour of hard paddling they at last threw an anchor rope into the runaway craft, the wind and the waves had grown so strong that turning about and going back to the east shore was out of the question.

“We must go across, my sons,” ordered the wise Indian woman, “if we try to turn, we shall all be drowned!”

With wonderful skill Netnowa steered the canoe



WITH WONDERFUL SKILL NETNOWA STEERED THE CANOE FROM
THE STERN.—*Page 86.*

from the stern, and told the boys how to use their paddles.

Soon dark clouds covered the whole sky, pale sheets of lightning flashed overhead toward the west shore and the low rumbling thunder rolled far away toward the western prairie.

"Now do your best, my sons," Netnowa encouraged the lads, "the rain clouds are following us, and the waves are growing."

And then the chilling autumn rain began to beat down on their brown and half-naked bodies, the waves grew and seething combers broke into their canoe and threatened every moment to dash the small bark against the larger one and swamp both in a wild, black turmoil.

In despairing silence the lads strained every nerve and muscle. Again and again a sharp command or a quick warning word from Netnowa rang out through the roar of the wind, the seething and splashing of the waves and the swishing of the rain.

For a long time the black churning waste of water seemed endless and every moment the grim specter of death seemed to be reaching with black hands out of the depth. At last a pale flash of lightning revealed for just a moment the forest

on the western shore like a low pitch-black cloud.

And now even Netnowa's courage failed her. "O my sons," she mourned, "this shore is full of big rocks and our canoes will be smashed on them in the darkness.

"I am an old woman and am ready to die and go to the Great Spirit. But you, my sons, are young and must swim ashore, if you can, and must take care of your young sisters!"

Several times they grazed one of the large boulders and every moment they expected their frail bark canoe to be broken and ripped on the rock.

Against hope they went on and suddenly a big wave threw them up on the beach safe.

When they realized in the noise of storm and waves and in the inky darkness that they were really safe on shore, Netnowa hugged and kissed her sons.

"The Great Spirit has saved us!" she cried. "Manitou has held the thunder-bird and the waves, so they could not swallow us. I shall see my girls again and the little children of my daughter."

In spite of the rain they soon started a fire by means of a steel, flint, and spunkwood which John

had learned to carry always with him in a well-oiled piece of buckskin where it could not easily get wet.

A good part of the night they sat around the fire which they had built in an open spot well sheltered by thickets of spruce and balsam fir. Before midnight the wind had swung around to the northwest, it rushed, soughed and roared in the tree tops and the rain continued to come down in a cold spray; but the three people in the great lonely wilderness were as happy as boys at a picnic.

Netnowa told stories; many and wonderful stories of fun and hunting, of war parties, of ghosts and dreams and superstitions. She had made many long journeys and knew many tribes and many white traders. She was by birth an Ottawa of Lake Huron; her husband, Taweninne, had been a Chippewa, but she also knew the Crees and the Assiniboinis and could tell many stories of the warlike, treacherous Sioux, who for more than two hundred years, or four lives, as Netnowa counted time, had been the traditional deadly enemies of the Chippewas.

The three people had built a white man's fire, a big roaring fire, which blazed and crackled and

sent up the steam from the wet boughs of the thick evergreens. When the fire began to burn low the boys would say:

“Now, Mother, wait just a short measure till we run down and drag up some more drift-wood from the beach of the big Muddy Water.” And when, at last the lads became drowsy, and huddling close together, fell asleep on the wet moss, she covered them with the only blanket brought across the lake, while she crouched in silence near the fire, most scantily clad in a thin jacket and skirt of traders’ cotton.

Her thoughts went back to the time, when she was a lithe young girl at Lake Huron. She heard Taweninne play the flute as he did in the days he won her for his bride in the village of the friendly Ottawas. A good hunter and a good husband he had always been. He never beat her, he never spoke angry words to her and on many a long journey he had carried the small children if he did not have to travel ahead in order to hunt for meat. When the men drank rum she did not have to hide his gun and knife, she knew he would remain sober.

Happy had been the days when she and Taweninne lived at Lake Huron and on the Menominee. All her children lived and seldom were sick

when most Indian mothers lost half of their children. Those were happy summers and winters, too. There were not so many traders then and there was much less drunkenness amongst her people, and deer and beaver were plentiful everywhere. Now one had to go far west for beaver or into the dangerous borderland of the Sioux country, where both Sioux and Chippewa were afraid to hunt, and Netnowa remembered two lone Chippewa families who had been murdered by a war-party of Sioux.

What would become of the Indian people, when the beaver were all gone? Since Taweninne and Keewatin had gone to the land of spirits, misfortune had followed her family. Her daughter's husband had been killed in a drunken brawl, several times she and her children had nearly lost their lives; often they had not had enough to eat, and even now they were very poor.

When the fire began to burn low, she walked through the wet brush and brought a load of driftwood from the beach.

"My sons must sleep and be warm," she said to herself, "for they are only boys, but soon they will be men."

And as she looked at the sleeping lads, hope lit up her sad and wrinkled face.

"I shall see my sons grow up to be men," she murmured, "and I shall see my daughters married to good men. When I was a little girl, Watosa, the wise Ottawa prophet, dreamed that he saw me walk on two sticks and saw my hair as white as snow. So I shall live to be a very old woman. The waters will not swallow me and the Great Spirit will give me meat in winter and I shall see my children grown up before I follow Taweninne and Keewatin to the land of spirits. My sons will have wives, but they will not put me away, when I am too old to work for them."

At last her weary eyes closed as she leaned against the rough trunk of a gnarled birch and in her dreams she visited the burying ground at the Grand Portage and placed food and tobacco on the graves of Taweninne and Keewatin; and she saw herself as a little girl picking flowers and berries in the summer woods at Lake Huron.

The wind carried the dismal howl of a pack of wolves to the fireplace and her dreams were ended. "The maheengunug have torn down a moose," she murmured. "I must place some wood on the fire, so my sons will be warm for they

are only boys.''' And she groped through the wet brush, searched on the rain- and wind-swept beach for the driftwood, while her sons slept soundly under their blanket. It was twoscore of years ago, when, as a young woman with steps elastic and eyes sparkling she watched over her firstborn child in the hard life of the wilderness. Ever since that time she had borne the cares of wife and mother. Through many cold winters; through starvation and war, the horrors of savage life; through dangers of storm-lashed waters and through all the countless hardships and dangers of Indian life she had brought her children. A wife's and mother's sorrow had not been spared her. Two of her sons had died after they had almost grown to manhood, and the father of her children had now gone to his last camping-place. Many times when everybody was despairing and ready to die, she kept hope and courage alive and by her wonderful endurance and faith in the Great Spirit she had many times saved the life of her young children in the hard wild forests of the Chippewa.

A few hours ago by her skill, courage, and endurance she had taken her two sons through a storm, which neither white trader nor boldest In-

dian would have dared to face. But even now, she was thinking only of her children, who were no longer children, and of the little girls of her widowed daughter at Red River. To herself she gave no thought, although the first signs of snow had appeared in the long braids of her black hair.

"I must find food for my boys," she thought. "My poor girls will be much worried. They will think the waves of the Muddy Water have swallowed us. We cannot return to them until the wind dies and the waves go down. And they will cry much, till they see our canoes gliding over the water."

The gray dawn of morning at last followed the blackness of night. Low clouds of fine cold rain came still drifting over the poplars and spruces. On the lake, the muddy waters rolled angrily until they broke into whitish, seething foam. Of the great wilderness of lake and forest, only a small expanse was visible, all else was shut out by a gray wall of the cold drizzling rain.

There in the chill dawn stood the Indian mother, and as she heard the yellowing foliage of the birch and poplar flutter in the wind and saw the first dead leaves fall on the rain-sodden beach, she offered a prayer to the Great Spirit and then, as

she gazed at the gray rolling mist and at the muddy waves breaking among the big boulders, she murmured:

“The first snow will soon be falling. I must gather all my children together and find a good hunting camp, before the great cold comes down from the North.”

After a while she went back to the fire, where her sons were still sleeping. She put more wood on the fire and then called the boys, saying:

“My sons, you must now rise and find us some food; for the wind will blow and the rain will come down for two more days and we shall be very weak, if we do not eat until we have again crossed the Muddy Water.”

“But, my mother,” replied Womegew, “how can we go hunting if all our powder and lead is on the other side of the angry lake?”

“My sons, you will find food,” answered Netnowa. “If you will rise now, before Mahkwa, the always hungry bear, eats it or the small animal hunters carry it away.”

And the lads arose and did as Netnowa told them and on the beach of the lake they found many fish. The slim pickerel, who shoots at his prey from under the lily pads and from among the

stalks of wild rice; and the spiny-finned sunfish, who is so wide that the pickerel cannot swallow him; and the mottled perch, who conceals himself among the weeds; many of these had been thrown on shore by the suddenly risen storm the night before. They had been hunting and feeding in shallow water and the rolling waves had seized them and had thrown them on the sand, where they flapped about until they died. They were as fresh as if Netnowa had caught them in her net. She roasted some on green twigs over a bed of red coals and others she baked in molds of clay and thus she and her sons, although they could not hunt for meat, had plenty of good food for two days, after which time the lake became calm so they could paddle back to the east shore.

When the two girls saw their mother and brothers paddle toward their camp, they shouted and danced with great joy, for they had cried for them as lost, thinking that no canoe could live in the storm that had passed over the big Muddy Water.

CHAPTER XII

A BEAR HUNT

A FEW days later, when the weather was fair and the lake was quiet, Netnowa with her family started south on Lake Winnipeg for the mouth of the Red River. Ducks were quite numerous on the lake and the boys did some hunting as they traveled along leisurely, for they had no corn or rice or dried venison left now and were compelled to secure their daily meat as they traveled from place to place.

When they reached the mouth of Red River, it was dark, but Netnowa decided to go on to a good camping place several miles up the river. They had paddled but a short distance up stream when they heard the hoot of an owl. A moment later they heard a second owl, and then a third one replied from a small island. Netnowa now became afraid and whispered to the boys to stop paddling.

“I fear,” she continued, “the cry of the owls

comes from Sioux warriors who are trying to ambush us. We had better turn around."

They all knew that the mouth of the Red River was more than two hundred miles from the Sioux country; but the Sioux were aware that parties of Chippewas often passed this place, and several times within the life of Netnowa, small parties of bold Sioux warriors had come down the Red River and had ambushed and killed several unsuspecting Chippewas within ten miles of Lake Winnipeg and also at the mouth of the Assiniboin; for this reason the Chippewas always traveled with extreme caution near the mouths of the Red and Assiniboin rivers.

As they let the canoe drift with the current, John saw something swimming in the water ahead of them, but the night was so dark that they could not make out for certain what it was.

"My son, I believe it is a Sioux," whispered Netnowa. "You must kill him with your spear!"

Netnowa and Womegew steered the canoe near the supposed Sioux, and John grasped his spear to drive it into the head of the swimming enemy. But just as he was about to strike, the supposed enemy began to flap its wings and swam to the

shore with a great noise, followed by a brood of young, still too small to fly; for in the darkness they had mistaken the body of a swimming goose for the head of a man. They all laughed at their mistake, but the fear of the Sioux had so unnerved them all that they picked their way back along the lake shore for a mile and spent the night behind a dry ridge. Here they lay or sat all night wrapped up in their blankets, but without a morsel of food because they were afraid to make a fire for fear that the Sioux might creep up on them under cover of the night and then fall upon them at dawn as was the custom of Indian war parties.

The two young girls soon fell asleep and even the boys felt that they were safely concealed from their enemies; only to the senses of old Netnowa no sleep came. All night she sat crouching in her blanket and not once did she leave her place. Her keen ears heard the creaking and squeaking of the rushes, and distinguished the timid intermittent hops of the rabbits from the leisurely foraging rustle of the bushy-tailed skunk and the quick, nervous scurrying of the wood-mice. When daylight broke, her keen black eyes caught the movement of every bush and tuft of tall grass.

Her hand reached out to the sleeping boys at her right.

“My sons,” she whispered, “you must be ready for the enemies of your fathers. They may spring at us like hungry panthers out of the thicket.”

Thousands of swallows began to skim over the rushes, and countless blackbirds, with a less graceful flight and uttering their family call of “chack, chack,” arose from their roosts in the rushes and scattered to their feeding grounds of wild rice. Flocks of ducks arose with much flapping and quacking and, on whistling wings, passed hither and thither, while myriads of black coots bobbed and splattered playfully over the shallow water near shore.

“My children, the birds all tell me that we are safe,” said old Netnowa, “there are no Sioux on the lake. Let us build a fire and cook a meal, for you must be very hungry.”

The meal over, they traveled leisurely back along the shore and up Red River. They met no Sioux or sign of enemies and never knew whether the voices that drove them back were those of harmless nightbirds or of their implacable human foes.

A few miles up the river they found the camp of Obasha and her two little girls who were in good health, but very short of food, because the mother could not go out to gather rice, and she and her children had to depend for food on the gifts of friendly hunters and their wives.

Netnowa talked long with her daughter about all the trouble that had come to her within the last two years.

“The Great Spirit,” she said, “has taken away my husband and my oldest son and I and my children are left very poor, but my two sons are growing up and will soon be able to hunt and trap. It will be a long time before they will be wise and steady like men, but they are good boys and I do not have to scold them much. But until they are men, they will do some things that are foolish, as they did when we were almost drowned in the Lake of Muddy Water.”

The Indians in this camp were all very kind to Netnowa and her family and the chief took John and Womegew to a creek where beaver were plentiful and told them that on this creek none but themselves would be allowed to hunt.

On a beaver pond in this creek John set three traps and as he was still too weak to press down

the heavy spring like a man, Netnowa showed him how to tie the spring with a strong cord, until the pan had been safely adjusted. The next morning, to his great joy, he had caught two beavers and, as he was not strong enough to take them out of the trap, he carried each one home separately with the trap and his mother helped him to take them out and showed him how to dry the skins so that the traders would pay a good price for them.

They stayed at this place for two months and when the boys did not secure enough meat, the other hunters gave them of their provisions so that Netnowa's camp was never in want as long as there was any game in the neighborhood.

At the end of two months the game began to fail and the whole camp decided to move. In the evening, after they had been on the trail a day, old Netnowa, when the others went to sleep, began to sing and pray, for men, women and children were now reduced to starvation rations. Several times John woke up during the night and heard his old mother still praying earnestly to the Great Spirit.

In the morning she said to Womegew: "My son, last night the Great Spirit came to me in my

dream and said, 'Netnowa, to-morrow you shall eat the flesh of a fat bear. Near the end of your day's journey, a game trail leads into a hollow, which ends in a small meadow. The storm has thrown tall pines into this meadow and under a large trunk you will find a bear!' Now, my son, say nothing to any one, but go and kill the bear."

Womegew, however, was often disrespectful to his mother. He left the tepee, saying: "The old woman tells me we are going to eat a bear to-day, but I do not know who is going to kill him. I am too weak to hunt bear in this cold weather and would rather go hungry till we find another beaver pond."

An old woman, hearing this disrespectful language, reproved him for it, saying: "If your mother and your white brother were as lazy as you are, your family would never eat meat of their own killing and you would have no beaver skins for the traders. You will never be a warrior and a hunter; you are too lazy and you are afraid to hunt a sleeping bear. The Sioux will never fear you and the young women of the Chipewa will hold you in contempt."

But Womegew would not look for the bear, and when the men started out all carrying some bag-

gage, he took only his gun and let the other members of the family carry the mats and blankets and kettles.

About the middle of the afternoon they all came to the camping place and threw their baggage on the ground. Some of the men sat down to rest, while others went away to hunt, for putting up the tepees was the work of the women.

While the men were waiting for the women to come up, it occurred to John that he might try to kill the bear, for he had easily recognized the hollow of which his mother had spoken. So he loaded his gun for bear and started back on the trail.

At the end of half a mile, he met Tawana, a relative of Taweninne. Tawana was a stingy woman who begrudged the meat her husband had occasionally given to the widowed daughter of Netnowa. She also looked upon John as an intruder among the Indians and often annoyed him with her sharp tongue. When she saw him coming now with his gun she stopped and said sneeringly: "Are you going to kill Indians? You will never be a man, you are like a timid white squaw who screams when she sees a little wood-

mouse. You should go back to the whites, you will never be an Indian. You are like a worthless dog, and Netnowa ought to drown you in the beaver pond."

John answered nothing to these reviling words, but went quietly on his way and, at the end of a mile, found the hollow.

Having followed this ravine for some distance, he came to a meadow just as his mother had told, and looking around he noticed a small cloud of vapor rising over a spot near a large log. He approached very carefully and made out the form of a large bear coiled up and asleep in a kind of cavity made by the log and the snow.

With trembling hands he held the muzzle of his gun close to the head of the animal and fired. The cavity filled with black smoke and a part of the thin snow ceiling caved in from the force of the concussion, but the boy hunter quickly ran away from his game and re-loaded his gun. When there was no sign of movement in the cave, the boy took a long pole and with it he cleared away some of the snow, for he began to think that perhaps he had been mistaken about the bear and had fired his gun at a black stump, but he was

soon convinced that he was actually poking the soft fur and skin of a bear and that the animal was quite dead.

As soon as he was sure of this, he ran home as fast as he could.

“My mother,” he called under his breath, “I have killed the bear.”

Old Netnowa looked at him doubtfully for a moment, but when she saw that he was really in earnest, she hugged and kissed him and exclaimed:

“My little white son has killed his first bear. He will be a great hunter like Taweninne and I and my daughters shall soon eat our own meat!”

The whole camp became very much excited as soon as the news became known, and four men ran to fetch the bear. According to Indian custom, Netnowa invited the whole camp to a feast of the First Fruits, a feast which was always held when a young hunter had killed his first moose or bear or other big game.

There were twenty-four people in this camp and on these occasions every one ate all he could. So when the feast ended about midnight, very little was left of the bear but scraps and bones

and the skin, which always belonged to the man who had killed the game.

Every man, woman, and child in camp went home happy and praised the white son of Netnowa except the scold, Tawana. She had been given a sound beating by her husband for using bad talk to the white son of Netnowa and had been compelled to remain hungry in her own lodge.

CHAPTER XIII

ADVENTURES WITH BIG GAME

WHEN spring came, Netnowa and her family traveled up the Assiniboin River for about two hundred miles. She intended to visit a kinsman named Peshaubo, who had left Lake Huron a long time ago, and had now for two years lived with two other men on a small lake near the Assiniboin River. He had sent word to Netnowa that if she would come to his camping place he and his men would provide for herself and daughters until her sons were grown up.

On arriving at Peshaubo's camp, the old man recognized Netnowa at once, although he had not seen her for many years. Then he looked at John and inquired: "Who is he?"

"He is my white son, whom I bought at Lake Huron," Netnowa replied, "and I wish that you would teach him to hunt elk and buffalo, and trap beaver and otter and other animals whose fur we can sell to the traders. Taweninne and my oldest son, Keewatin, are dead, but John is a good

son, and would learn quick if he had a father or big brother to teach him."

Peshaubo looked at John while Netnowa was speaking, and then answered:

"He has the face of a good son, and his legs are those of a good runner. I will be as a father to the white son of Netnowa and teach him to hunt the fleet antlered elk and the big, shaggy buffalo, who do not live in the forests of the Chippewa, but blacken the great plain of the Assiniboin country. I will teach him the habits of the beaver people, who build their dams and houses on many small streams, and who can cut down a tree without a hatchet, and I will show him where the otter slides into the stream.

"But you and your daughters must now work in our camp, for we have long been our own squaws. You must make our moccasins, tan our elk-skins, dry our meat, and have meat or fish boiling in the kettles when we come home tired and hungry from our long hunts."

Then Peshaubo opened his big sunjégwun, or cache, as the whites call it.

"Here," he said, "you will find dried meat of elk and buffalo, and dried tails of the beaver, and many skins, large and small. You must take care

of all, and make for us what we need, and take what you need for your family, for we have more than we can ever carry away to sell to the traders.”

Netnowa at once took care of the wants of Peshaubo, whom she called her son, and her daughters looked after the needs of the other two men.

During the summer the white boy learned much about fish and game and wild birds, because Peshaubo and his men had to do some hunting all the time.

One day when the golden-rod had begun to bloom, Peshaubo told John to get ready for a great buffalo hunt.

“I have heard the buffaloes,” he said, “and to-morrow we shall find them.”

When John looked at him with a skeptical expression the old man laughed and said: “The ears of my little white son have not been opened and I shall now open them so that he may be able to hear buffalo like his old father.

“My son, lie down with your ear close to the ground and listen.”

At first the boy was a little afraid to lie down for he wondered how Peshaubo intended to

open his ears; however, when the old man himself lay down with his ear close to the ground John did the same.

At first John could hear nothing, but when he had composed himself he heard a very faint rumbling like distant thunder. For a few moments all was quiet, but then came again the peculiar sound.

"I hear, my father," said the boy, "the wings of the thunder-bird far toward the evening sun, and to-night the clouds will come and scatter rain over the prairie so that we cannot hunt buffalo to-morrow."

"My son," replied Peshaubo, "you are still a dull Indian and a poor hunter.

"You have just seen the sun touch the great prairie, and it is now painting the sky red, and you should know that when the sky is red, the thunder-bird is asleep on the far-away mountains. You do not hear the wings of the thunder-bird; you hear the tramping of the hoofs and the bellowing from the throats of many buffaloes, for this is the Moon of the Battle of the Bulls. I hear that there are a great, great many of them, as many as there are trees in the forests of the Chippewa.

“Remember this, my son, if you would be a great hunter: When the golden-rods begin to show yellow and when the young gophers are nearly as big as their parents, you must put your ear to the ground and listen for mushkooda, the big fighting cattle of the prairie.”

The next morning Peshaubo, the two other Indians and John were astir before sunrise. Peshaubo had bought four horses of the traders, and this was to be John's first great buffalo hunt. The four hunters let their horses go at an easy gait for a long time without seeing or hearing any buffalo or anything bigger than gophers, badgers, and jack-rabbits. When it seemed to John that they must have traveled at least ten miles, Peshaubo dismounted and his three followers did the same.

After Peshaubo had lain a few minutes with his ear on the ground he called out:

“I hear the great battle of the bulls and they are not more than a few measures away. Let us ride to them directly and we shall begin a great feast before the sun goes down.”

After riding about two miles they came to the crest of a ridge, from which they beheld a sight,

the like of which John had never seen before.

About two miles away, countless herds of buffaloes covered the plains like large black patches.

Great clouds of dust arose over the numerous herds, and the hunters could plainly hear the bellowing of the fighting bulls.

“Manitou has given us a great abundance of meat,” remarked Peshaubo, as he waved his hand in the direction of the great herds, some of which could now be seen in motion. “There are twenty times a thousand of them. The Assiniboins and the Mandans and the tribes south will have meat for their wives and children and will sell many tongues and skins and many loads of pemmican to the traders.”

As the hunters knew that at this time they could go boldly amongst the animals without frightening them away, they left their horses in charge of one man, while the others proceeded on foot towards the game.

The first animal they came upon was an enormous old bull, who stood somewhat apart from one of the herds. And here again John beheld a view of wild life such as can no longer be seen on earth.

The old bull was bleeding from several large gashes in his flank, while a pack of big fierce-looking wolves surrounded him.

“He is old now and has lost a big fight,” said Peshaubo. “See, where the horns of a young rival have gashed his flank. When he is tired out and falls down the hungry maheengunug will devour him.”

To Peshaubo and the other Indians this sight was nothing unusual. It was the fate of all the old bulls; but the white boy’s anger arose at the fierce snarling brutes, who now sprang at the hams of the wounded buffalo, and as he angrily, with snorting nostrils, turned his formidable horns against those, others attempted to set their flashing fangs into his sides.

“You miserable brutes!” John exclaimed, as he fired and killed the biggest of the pack. “Off with you!”

At the sound of the gun the wolves ran off a short distance, while John, looking at the big wounded buffalo, quickly reloaded his gun.

“It’s no use,” he murmured, “the old giant has fought his last battle. He’s too badly wounded and those gray brutes will worry him to death.”

With those words he sent the second bullet through the bull's heart, and the great creature fell in a heap, dead.

Again the boy reloaded his gun and followed his Indian friends, for he knew that the meat of the buffalo just killed would not be fit to eat. When he had passed on a few rods he heard a great snarling and growling behind him. He looked back and saw that the pack of savage gray brutes had already begun to feast on the warm flesh of the dead giant.

Ahead of him the big, dark hulks were feeding, fighting and wallowing in the dust. The herd was in such a state of commotion that the young hunter crept in amongst the big animals without causing a stampede. Knowing that the flesh of the bulls was but poor eating, he concealed himself in one of the hollows found on the prairie to this day, and known as buffalo wallows, to wait for a good shot at a fat young cow. But by this maneuver the hunter came near losing his life. A number of enraged, fighting bulls came surging straight for his hiding place. Several of the heavy, massive beasts pushed and crowded within a few feet of him all around the wallow, and so entirely engrossed were they in their battles

against one another that they paid no attention to the lad's frantic gestures and loud yells. Four of the mad beasts he had to shoot down in order to protect himself from being trampled to death under their hoofs.

The truth is, the young hunter's bold feat amongst the fighting bulls had been accomplished more through fear of the ridicule of his companions than by superior courage. When the big, snorting, fighting bulls surrounded him he felt the strongest inclination to run like a dog from a pack of wolves, but he knew that the story of such an act, if the Indians saw it, would follow him to every camp from the Assiniboin to Lake Superior, and of Indian ridicule and torment the white boy had suffered much in the years gone by and for that reason he would rather be killed by the bulls than become the butt of the jokers and story-tellers at every camp.

He was in high spirits as he began to look for his friends, who had laughed at him when he shot the wolf and stopped to kill the wounded bull. After looking around a while the lad discovered his hunting companions in a ludicrous predicament.

They had killed a young cow, and in their ex-

citement had thrown down their guns without reloading. As they approached the fallen cow a big bull suddenly rushed upon them and drove them off, and no matter how hard they tried to drive or lure him away, he would not forsake his dead mate. Very soon an old cow, perhaps the mother of the young cow, joined the bull in defending the carcass of the young animal.

One Indian after the other attempted to lure or drive the beasts away, but each time, badly scared, the Indian would scamper away as fast as he could move his legs from the mad attack of bull or cow, and the race, although truly a race for life, appeared as ludicrous to John as any clown race in a white man's circus ever appeared to boy or man.

It was the white boy's turn to laugh.

"You claim to be warriors," he shouted to the perplexed Indians, "and you can't take a dead cow away from her mate."

He had mounted his horse again and rode toward the two buffaloes. The bull immediately charged, and with loud laughter the Indians watched the shaggy bull chase horse and rider. But no sooner did the bull turn, than the boy rider also turned, and with a shot at close range

he brought down the noble brute. Another shot brought down the old cow and now the Indians could get to their game and their guns.

They had now all the meat they could carry away, but they were rather crestfallen. The white boy upon whom they had looked with much silent contempt, had proved by far the better hunter, and had indeed shown skill and daring which even such an old hunter as Peshaubo was compelled to admire.

“My son,” he commented as they were roasting quantities of buffalo steak in a small poplar hollow and discussing with much laughter the events of the day, “my son, I see now that you will be a great hunter. Your mother will be very proud of you and she and her daughters will not want meat while the buffaloes graze on the plain and the moose browse in the forest.”

John was in high spirits and was treated with much consideration by the Indians. It had been the greatest day of his life; but in the presence of the old hunters he refrained from bragging about his deeds. Moreover, he had a feeling that his bravery had largely been just luck. If the Indians knew how terribly scared he was in the buffalo wallow and just killed four bulls be-



THE BOY RIDER ALSO TURNED, AND WITH A SHOT AT CLOSE RANGE HE BROUGHT DOWN THE NOBLE BRUTE.—Page 118.

cause a herd of mad, fighting beasts had surrounded him so that he couldn't run away, they wouldn't think him a great hunter. And if they knew how he had felt all his long hair rise on his head, when the bull chased him, and how he expected every moment that both he and his horse would be ripped open by the sharp horns of the madly racing, snorting monster, they would surely ridicule the white son of Netnowa.

When night came, the boy could not sleep. He lived over again the events of the day. He thought of his parents in far-away Kentucky and tried to puzzle out where Ellen might be and why Netnowa never wanted to talk of her. Not until long past midnight, when the wild cattle began to bellow again all round the camp did he fall sound asleep.

Late in autumn, John went hunting elk by himself. In a grove of poplar and cottonwood on the Assiniboin, where elk were numerous, he concealed himself in a thicket and imitated the call of a cow elk, because he had to get close to his game in order to kill it. When he had repeated the call a number of times a great antlered bull came running at full speed toward his hiding place. When the boy caught sight of the great

beast coming straight for him with his formidable branched antlers that seemed half as long as the big bull himself, he was seized by a wild panic. He dropped his gun, ran for the nearest clump of trees and climbed up an old box-elder as quickly as a scared cat chased by a bulldog. When he looked around, he saw the bull running off in the distance, for he had also been badly scared when he saw a hunter spring out of the thicket.

John now began to feel ashamed of his fright and thought how the Indians would laugh at him if they knew how he had run away from the elk. So he concealed himself again and once more began to call. Soon another elk approached and this time the boy did not lose his nerve, but killed the animal at a distance of twenty-five yards, just when he began to grow suspicious and started to turn back.

It was, of course, impossible for the boy to carry the meat of the big animal to camp, about five miles away, and he started home in high spirits, intending to tell of his good fortune.

When he was about two miles from camp he noticed some dark creature which he took to be a bear, following him in the evening dusk. He sat

down with the intention of shooting the bear, but the animal kept on coming right toward him. John knew that a black bear would not do this and now concluded that the bear must be a grizzly. In those days grizzlies were very ferocious and frequently attacked hunters. Peshaubo had told him: "My son, when you shoot at a grizzly you should be near trees. One ball does not often kill him, and he is a brave beast and will nearly always attack the hunter."

John now began to walk faster toward camp, but the bear also came along faster. There were no trees near, and being afraid of a fight with a grizzly in the open, the boy began to run.

When the fleeing hunter had almost reached the camp he heard some one call his name, and looking back discovered that he had been running away from Womegew, who had pulled an old coat over his head and in the dim light of evening had thus easily deceived his brother.

The Indians laughed a good deal at John, but Netnowa scolded Womegew and said if John had shot him Womegew alone would have been to blame.

Netnowa had become worried because John stayed much longer than she had expected and

she had sent Womegew to look for him. When she heard that John had killed a big elk she was very much pleased and 'next morning she and her daughters went to smoke the meat and bring it into camp.

The lad was happy now. He was treated like a young man of the tribe and his daring exploits as a hunter became known in every camp on the Assiniboin.

He continually asked both Indians and traders if they had heard of a white woman living with the Crees or Assiniboins. An Indian claimed to have heard of a white squaw living south of the great Lake Athabasca and a trader had heard of a white girl living a few years ago with the Crees far north toward Hudson Bay. Netnowa told him that a Cree woman had bought Ellen and had taken her north.

"But the Cree people," she said, "live in a very poor country and wander much from place to place, for they must try to find the roaming caribou.

"And you shall not go to the Cree country, my son. You must stay with your old mother, Netnowa, who was always good to you and fed you, when you were too young to hunt."

CHAPTER XIV

HOW JOHN FOUGHT FEAR AND WAHBO

WHEN the winter drew to a close Netnowa expressed a great desire to return once more to her friends and relatives on Lake Huron. So when the ice had gone out of the rivers and lakes the whole party left for a trading house on Red River, where Peshaubo and his men sold their furs to the traders.

From the trading house they moved several days' journey up the river, and as they found game and beaver very plentiful in this region, they decided to remain there a year to hunt beaver during winter and spring.

At this place a Shawnee who claimed to be a prophet came to their camp from the East.

John was hunting on the prairie away from his camp when the prophet approached him. At first John thought the man was a Sioux and made ready for battle with him, but when he came closer he perceived that he was dressed like a Chippewa.

The man told John by signs that he must go home, but he would not say a word and would not look him in the face. John thought the man was crazy, but he nevertheless accompanied the stranger home. Arrived in the camp, the prophet sat and smoked in silence for a long time before he acquainted his host with the object of his visit. At last he laid aside his pipe and told John that he had come with a message from the Great Manitou, whose will it was that the Indians should change their old manner of living.

“From this time on,” he said, “you must never let the fire go out in your lodge, for the life of the fire and the life in your body are the same, and if the fire goes out, you will die. You must throw away your flint and steel, and if you wish to make fire in a new camp you must rub it out of two sticks as the Indians did long ago, before the white traders came into the country.

“All your dogs must be killed and the Great Spirits will let you find game without the help of the dogs.

“No Chippewa shall strike a child nor a man, nor shall he beat his squaw, and he shall not taste the fiery drink of the traders.

“You shall not go to war against the Sioux,

and if the Sioux come to your own country the Great Spirit will make you invisible to them so they will not be able to find you.”

Most of the Indians believed the prophet, for they were a superstitious people. They killed their dogs and threw away their flints and steels and medicine bags. Losing their dogs and not being able to make a fire in wet and cold weather caused a great deal of suffering, but for some time there was less drunkenness in their camps and less talk of war.

John, who often talked with the white traders, was less superstitious than the Indians, and he refused to kill his dogs and did not throw away his flint and steel. The Indians for some time lived up to the precepts of the new religion, but after the prophet went away to visit another distant village they soon returned to all their old habits.

They were, however, somewhat emboldened by the saying of the prophet that Manitou would make them invisible to the Sioux and a party of them, including John and Netnowa's family, went to hunt beaver on the tributaries of the upper Red River, much farther south than they had ever ventured toward the country of the Sioux.

John and his family left the large party and made a camp still farther south.

In this country both the Sioux and the Chippewa had been, for years, afraid to hunt and it was for that reason so abundantly stocked with game that John trapped a hundred large beavers in less than a month. During this time the family lived on the flesh of the beavers and the young hunter never fired his gun. At last, however, beaver began to be scarce and he was compelled to shoot an elk. At the sound of the gun, Netnowa and all the women and children in the camp fled into the woods, for so great and constant was their fear of the Sioux, that they thought one of these had discovered John at his traps and had fired at him.

Soon afterward John sold all his peltries to a trader, who promised to send two men to assist him in carrying the furs to a large Chippewa camp a day's journey northward, but before the two men arrived John and the women spent a night of terror at their camp.

Netnowa had discovered the tracks of several Sioux near camp and urged her son to flee at once, but he was unwilling to leave the fruits of all his labor to the marauding Sioux. That night

Netnowa built no fire in the lodge and no one closed an eye in sleep. About midnight they distinctly heard steps outside and every moment expected to hear the warwhoop of the Sioux and see them rush into the lodge. At last John ventured to look out and saw some creature move about in the darkness. At first his fear made him think he saw the crouching form of a Sioux, but the next moment he was sure that he saw some small animal. He struck it with his tomahawk and found that he had killed a porcupine which had been nosing around the camp.

Before daylight came, the terror-bound inmates, huddled close together around John and Netnowa, again heard footsteps outside and felt sure that they were the footsteps of the Sioux.

“My children,” whispered Netnowa, “the time has now come when we must all die together, but the Sioux shall not say that the wife and the children of Taweninne died like scared rabbits. My son, you will fire at the enemies of our people and I and my daughters will use our knives and hatchets until our breath leaves us.”

Then John, with his gun cocked, noiselessly peered out into the darkness and soon saw two men standing under a birch close by. He took

careful aim at them, but, thinking that they might possibly not be Sioux, he called to them before firing and discovered to his inexpressible joy that they were the two men the trader had sent for him.

Thus ended the night of terror. The two men had not seen or heard any indication of the presence of Sioux, but Netnowa would not delay the departure of her family any longer than was absolutely necessary and at daybreak they all started for the camp of Peshaubo, which they reached safely late in the day just as the smoke from the evening fires of the squaws began to rise over the lodges of their friends.

The young men and the young women in camp called John a bold hunter and wanted to hear all about his lone camp and how he trapped and skinned his game with one hand, while with the other he never let go of his gun; but Peshaubo and the old men in camp reproved him for exposing his mother and sisters to the attacks of the Sioux and called him a foolhardy youth and Netnowa said: "My son will never hunt again on the streams of the Sioux, he can find enough beavers in the Chippewa country."

The incident, however, had given John a very

good opinion of himself, because he felt that even Netnowa and the old men thought he had done a brave thing by hunting so near the Sioux country, and he was now more disposed than ever to ignore the fears and superstitions of the Indians. One day late in summer, as he was hunting for ducks and geese on Red River, he came to a bend which looked like one of the best camping-places an Indian could find. There was a fine sandy beach, a small level plain above it, and thick woods and a high hill behind the open plain, while at the foot of the hill flowed a large spring of clear water, so much better to drink than the muddy water of the Red River. But no Indian ever camped at this spot, and John knew well the story which kept them away, for Netnowa, who knew all Indian traditions, had told it the first time they had passed the place.

“A long time ago,” the story ran, “some Indians were camping at this beautiful spot. In the party were two brothers who fell into a quarrel with each other and one of them grew so angry that he plunged his hunting-knife into his brother’s breast, killing him instantly. The crime of fratricide was so rare among the Indians and was so abhorrent to them that they

killed the murderer on the spot and buried the two brothers in one grave."

The place was ever after called the "Camp of the Two Dead," and no hunting party or war party ever camped again on that spot. It was believed that the spirits of the two brothers would appear to any one camping there and would in many ways annoy him.

John thought it would be a fine thing to tell the Indians how he had built his fire at the Camp of the Two Dead and had slept soundly all night and thus, in defiance of Indian tradition and superstition, he pulled up his canoe on the sandy beach, built his campfire near the bubbling spring, and after he had eaten his supper of roast duck, lay down to sleep.

Naturally he could not help thinking of the story of the dead brothers, and soon he saw in his dream two men sit down opposite him at the campfire and look at him with staring eyes. He sat up and looked around him. The spring bubbled and gurgled so much louder than it had in the evening, and the branches of the trees swayed and sighed in the wind. He would have liked to leave the spot at once, but it was so dark that it would have been difficult to find another camp-

ing place, and although he now felt afraid to stay in this uncanny place, he was still more afraid to move.

After a while he fell asleep again, but it seemed as if he saw the two brothers all night. Now they were standing on the river bank, and seemed about to embark in his canoe. He tried to call out to them, but his voice failed him. After a while they annoyed him by poking him with long sticks, and laughed at him when he objected. He tried to get up and take the sticks away from them, but his legs refused to move.

Then it seemed that one of the spirits spoke to him, saying:

“Look, my brother! Behind you on the hill stands a deer; go and shoot it and give us half of the meat. We are very hungry because the angry Chippewa left no arms on our grave, and we cannot hunt.” He looked toward the hill in his dream, and saw a large antlered buck clearly outlined against the sky.

With the coming of daylight the visions of the night vanished, but John felt that he had passed through a night as full of terrors as the one in which he and his whole family expected to be killed by the Sioux.

Having now lived for years amongst the Indians, he had come almost to believe in dreams like them. After breakfast he went to the place where the spirit had shown him the buck. To his great surprise a large fat buck sprang out of a hazel thicket, and although the hunter's heart thumped violently and he felt his hair rise on his head, he threw up his gun and fired and brought him down.

When he arrived home and told Netnowa the story of his night's camp she would not touch the deer.

"Take it back," she ordered, "and give it to the Jebi, the dead men. It belongs to them and they will bring us much bad luck if we keep it." So John paddled up the stream again and left the buck on the beach where he had pulled up his canoe the night before.

On future hunting trips he avoided the Camp of the Jebi, the Two Dead, as carefully as the Indians, and the story of his experience strongly confirmed the Indians in their superstitious belief.

That fall around many an Indian campfire were related the adventures of Nunduwah, the white son of Netnowa.

“He will be a great hunter and a famous warrior,” said the women.

“He will be killed young,” said the old men, “for he has only the white man’s bravery. He is not wise like the Ojibway. The Sioux will scalp him or the Evil Spirits will put a sickness in him,” and the little girls and the boys dreamed of the terrible Sioux and of the two Jebi whom the white Nunduwah had defied.

There is no printed calendar in an Indian camp, but Nature herself records the procession of the months and the seasons.

Soon after Nunduwah’s adventure with the Jebi, the ducks and wild geese had again grown their wing feathers and did not spatter and dive helplessly before the canoes of the Indian hunters, but sailed and whizzed away through the air. The chipmunks began to gather the falling hazelnuts, the bears feasted on the wild plums and chewed up the choke-cherry bushes and the squaws gathered many a canoe-load of wild rice in the great marshes. The maples glowed in crimson red, while birches and poplar fringed every stream and lake with gold. Then the October winds swept away the crimson and the gold; the quacking ducks drifted southward in whizzing

clouds and the wild geese followed in endless honking wavy lines.

The first snow fell and the fourfooted dwellers of the forest printed the story of their wanderings in the soft white powder and told the red hunters where to look for their meat.

This winter appeared around the camps of Peshaubo and Netnowa a wonderful track such as no Indian had ever seen before, and none ever saw the creature that made the track. Some said it was a giant wolf, who once was a man and who had to eat an Ojibway child to again turn into a man. Some thought it was a spirit beast sent by the Shawnee prophet to drive away the game because the Indians had not followed his teachings; but most of them agreed that it was a monster sent by the Jebi because Nunduwah, the white hunter, had disturbed their peace, and no Indian would hunt in the region, where the tracks of Wahbo, the ghost beast, had been seen in the snow.

“This was a good camp,” said Bettowish, the laziest hunter, “before you insulted the Jebi. We found plenty of buffalo and elk on the prairie and moose and deer in the woods and many beavers on the little streams. But now the Wahbo is driving all the game away and the Ojibways

are afraid to hunt for fear of meeting the Wahbo and we cannot take our wives and children on a long journey in winter.”

“The Ojibways who are afraid of the Wahbo,” retorted John angrily, “are women and should stay at home and cut wood instead of pretending to hunt. Our many women and children have eaten up the game, that’s why the animals are no longer so plentiful, but I will go and hunt the Wahbo and kill him if I find him.”

When next morning a fresh snow had fallen John prepared to hunt the Wahbo. He took dried moose meat and wild rice for three days, so he could remain strong, in case he found no game. In his hunting-pouch he carried flint, steel and punk, and powder and buckshot for his double-barreled gun, for which he had given fifty fine beaver skins only a year ago. From his belt hung a small ax and a long sharp hunting-knife, and on his back he carried a blanket, a small kettle and an extra pair of moccasins and buckskin leggings.

For an hour he followed a well-beaten trail. Then he started to make a large circle around the camp. “If the Wahbo has hunted near camp, I shall come upon his trail,” he said to himself.

Many were the tracks which the young Hunter crossed. There were the long, striding tracks of the moose and along their deep trails they had bent and broken down the young poplars and birches and browsed off the twigs. "He has big teeth," thought John, "and can grind wood and bark into food."

He crossed the smaller tracks of the red deer, but where they had eaten was hard to tell. "The red deer are like girls," thought John; "they only pick bits of the sweetest food here and there as they travel about." Near a beaver pond the white rabbits had trampled the ground and had fed on the brush of the poplars which the beavers had felled, but had not had time to carry away before their pond froze over.

But the game was certainly getting scarce. Although John traveled in the almost noiseless manner of the Indian, he saw no game and the woods closed around him in silence. Except for the chattering of a red squirrel, the tap-tap-tap of the woodpeckers and the chirping of a few little birds, much too small for food, he heard no sound but his own footsteps and the soft stealthy tread of his two cur dogs who followed close behind him.

Thus he circled many miles through the silent winter forest until late in the afternoon he struck the track of Wahbo. His dogs bristled and showed both fear and hatred, when they sniffed at the odd track.

"The tracks are those of a monster wolf, but the pattern is that of a giant rabbit," said John, after he had carefully examined the trail for a short stretch. But about the exact character of the animal he was left in doubt, for loose snow had fallen into every step of the creature and had obliterated the pattern of the foot.

"Perhaps," thought John, "it is a big panther or a monster wolverine, or it may even be a Wahbo, a ghost-beast sent by the Jebi;" for in his heart he more than half believed in many of the superstitions of the Indians, among whom he had grown up.

Very carefully, but swiftly, the hunter and his dogs began to follow the trail of the Wahbo and the man knew from the action of the dogs that the trail was not old. It led southward toward the Sioux country, but of the Sioux the hunter now had no fear. He knew that they never made their winter camps near the evergreen forests of the Ojibways, but that they camped under the shel-

tering bluffs and in the groves of the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers where the white-tailed deer were abundant.

On and on led the trail of the Wahbo, straight south. "He is a hunter," thought John, "and has scented game as he followed the trail over miles of frozen swamp and forest." Perhaps the Wahbo was a giant panther and would spring upon him from a limb above the trail. But he must go on. If the Indians thought John was the cause of starvation in camp he might as well be killed in a fight with the Wahbo as be murdered by a superstitious Ojibway. And death was no stranger to the young hunter, he had looked him in the face many a time, for in every Indian camp death in many forms was always near. If he found the Wahbo, either he or the Wahbo would have to die in battle.

The sun touched the tree tops as the trail entered a dense spruce thicket on a frozen swamp. If the Wahbo was in the thicket the time had come for battle. John sat down and examined his gun, his knife, and his ax. He was ready. Now he circled around the thicket. The trail came out on the other side and led straight away to the south, and then the hunter knew that he was to sleep one

more night before he should come to the end of the trail.

He built himself a lean-to shelter of spruce boughs, and under it made a soft bed of balsam boughs. Then he built a fire and gathered a goodly pile of wood to keep the fire going through the night. With his ax he cut off a piece of frozen meat and boiled it with wild rice and gave each of his dogs a piece. For a while he sat and gazed at the stars. The snow glittered on the marsh, dark spruce trees, large and small, rose like silent sentinels from the sea of crystal white. From the south, where the forest shut off the view, came the long-drawn howl of wolves.

Visions of old Netnowa, his Indian mother, of his sister Ellen, as he had seen her last, passed through his mind. His white mother and father he could hardly imagine; they seemed to have faded away in the distance of time and space. Drowsiness overcame him and he almost fell asleep as he squatted before the fire; so he put on more wood and, Indian fashion, wrapped himself up in his blanket and, tired by his long journey, he soon entered the land where there are no trails to follow and where memories seldom trouble the young.

In the morning he took up the trail like a hound that must follow the bidding of instinct. A gentle drifting wind had almost obliterated it on the marsh, but the keen-eyed hunter followed by the little lumps of snow the traveling Wahbo beast had thrown up.

Toward noon he came to the carcass of a moose on the edge of a cedar swamp. A pack of wolves had torn down the great beast and half of the carcass had been devoured. If Wahbo had been there, then he was a devourer of flesh. By making a wide circle around the carcass he again picked up the odd trail of Wahbo, which led away to the southwest.

“He has left the Ojibway forest,” thought the hunter, “and has gone to the buffalo country of the Sioux.”

The trail led into one of those clumps of poplar characteristic of the border country between forest and prairie. He circled around the little poplar island and the trail did not come out. The hunter’s heart began to beat faster—Wahbo, the Ghost Beast, lay in the thicket.

He sent in his dogs, but followed close on their heels. Suddenly a monstrous wolf sprang up from under a windfall. The dogs yelped and

danced madly around him, holding the beast at bay. The hunter tried to send a load of shot into the brute's head, but the shot went wild. Then the enraged beast sprang at him. With his left arm the lad barely broke the spring at his throat, but instinctively the hunter's right hand drove the flashing knife into the vitals of the furious beast. He fell back as if stunned, his blood dyed the snow red. The dogs were at him again, and, watching a favorable moment, the hunter drove a load of buckshot into the brute's chest. Only now the hunter noticed that the blood was running from his left arm, and he sat down to bandage a deep gash the great fangs had torn in his arm. Had they reached his throat he never would have returned to Netnowa's lodge.

The beast was quite dead. It was the biggest old wolf John had ever seen, and he had only three legs; his right hind leg had been shot away near the body. The big three-legged beast had been the Wahbo. The hunter felt somewhat ashamed for not having much sooner solved the mystery of the ghost trail, but his mind, like that of the few Indians who had really seen the trail, had been clouded by superstition.

He quickly skinned the big wolf and rolled up

the skin. Then he went and cut a load of meat from the carcass of the moose and let his dogs eat their fill of the carcass. Before sunset he returned and camped for the night among the poplars of the Wahbo.

At sunrise he started for Netnowa's lodge. An hour's walk from home he met the old woman, who had come to look for him.

"My mother," he greeted her, "I bring you the skin of Wahbo. He was a big three-legged wolf!"

And Netnowa hugged and kissed her son as she had done when he had killed his first bear.

From that time on, even the best hunters spoke with great respect of Nunduwah, the white son of Netnowa, and they all felt secretly ashamed of their superstitious fear, and during the rest of the winter had no difficulty in finding enough game for their wives and children.

CHAPTER XV

THE DREADED SIOUX

WHEN spring came, the whole village moved to a lake not far from the edge of the great prairie and a day's journey farther south from their last camp. The abundant game of this region proved so attractive to the Indians that the younger men would not listen to the talk of the old men that Pukugesin Sahguhegun was too near the Sioux country.

"We will stay there till the leaves fall," they said; "the Sioux are afraid to come so far north and will not find us."

So the women began to set their nets and lines in the lake and never failed to land good catches of bass, pike, and crappie, and long-snouted greedy pickerel. But the pickerel they fed to the dogs, for they said: "Ogah has too many bones and they might stick in the throats of our little children and make them sick. No, Ogah, the pickerel, is not a good fish. He is only good to make the dogs fat."

But the women did not have to set their nets very often, for the hunters killed plenty of white-tailed deer everywhere and in the groves near the prairie they killed fat elks and in the forest around the lakes to the east of the camp, they found plenty of big moose.

Often the women went in small parties to cut up and dry the meat of elk and moose, wherever the big animals had fallen. For a day or two they remained near the carcass, then they carried the dried meat to camp and hung it up on scaffolds, and the large hides they tanned and worked up into moccasins, while the bones and scraps were left for the hungry wolves and the black bears whose keen nose can smell meat a long way off, as the west wind carries the odor into the forest.

Along the little streams of these hunting grounds the beavers had built many dams, and the hunters found many places where the long otters had played and slid into the rivers and lakes.

“We shall make big packs of fur here,” said the hunters, “after the snow has fallen. Why should we leave this good country? The Sioux are afraid of the Ojibway, for they know that the Ojibway are men who all have guns and will fight.”

Seldom had an Indian village been so happy, for there was not a poor hunter in camp. Every family had enough to eat, and every woman was drying and hanging up a big store of meat for the winter. There was no sickness in camp, for all were as healthy and happy in the warm sunshine as if the Great Spirit had specially created the region as a paradise for his Ojibway people. Never did the little children cry for food; they grew as fat as the young beavers in the ponds, and played all day as happily as the spotted fawns that followed their mothers through the thickets of wild hazel and roses.

The half-grown girls helped their mothers with dressing skins, and played and lounged under the speckled shade of the poplars. The boys hunted blackbirds in the marshes and red squirrels and rabbits in the woods, and tried their bows and arrows on the gophers that sat upright and scolded on the little prairies near camp.

Even the work of the women ran smooth and easy, and they could eat whenever they wished, because meat was so plentiful that they did not have to deny themselves to feed their children. So they laughed and chatted at their work, and went visiting, and gossiped, and played with their

children like the wild creatures of the forest.

And as the season advanced the wild berries began to ripen. First, the strawberries grew red in the grass and among the wild flowers, then the shadberries showed red and black on the high bushes, and a little later the boys and girls told that the blueberries were ripe on the open ridges among the tall jack-pines, and the women and children went with large birch-bark baskets to gather this richest and most abundant of all fruits of the Ojibway forest. Ozahwinun, the blueberry; wahbuhnoomin, the wild rice, and the sugar from the maple trees were the great vegetable foods of the Ojibway. If a village stayed long enough in a place where the soil was good, they also planted some squaw corn.

On the second day that the squaws had gone out blueberrying, Nemisqua, a young woman, found something which instantly aroused her attention, although to most white people it would have meant nothing in particular.

The find of Nemisqua was nothing more remarkable than the camping-place of three or four men. There were no remains of a campfire, but the grass and weeds were bent down where the campers had slept. Every Indian and every

good woodsman can tell from the shape of the bed and other signs the beds of deer, moose, and elk. All the women at once ran to see Nemisqua's find and all said: "They are not the beds of animals; they are the beds of men." And then all asked: "Who can they have been? No other Ojibway but ourselves are camping within a three-days' journey of this place, and none of our hunters have been away over night." And again they asked: "What men can have slept here?"

Nemisqua had gone to search the bushes near the men's sleeping place and now she came back holding up something in her hand.

"Look here," she almost whispered, "what I found in yonder killikinnick bush! Moccasins—a pair of worn-out moccasins the sleepers threw away!"

Old Netnowa looked at the moccasins for only a minute before she knew something about the campers.

"Oh, my daughters," she said, with a very serious air, "those are Sioux moccasins! No Ojibway woman makes such moccasins. The Sioux women have made these.

"The Sioux are spying around our camp and we are in great danger. If the men had only lis-

tened to me and had not gone so near the Sioux country, even if game is very plentiful here! We must go back to camp at once; the Sioux may fall upon us any minute."

And they all seized their baskets and ran home.

"The Sioux are around us!" they cried out to the men. "The Sioux have found our camp! What shall we do? Here are Sioux moccasins which Nemisqua found in a bush and she found the place where four men had slept. The men built no fires, so they must have been Sioux, for any Ojibway hunters would not have camped near us without a fire, and they would have seen our camp-smoke and would have visited us."

The men were convinced at once and sent out runners to find all the hunters who had left camp and bring them in as soon as possible; and by midnight all the absent hunters had come in.

And now the joyful life at the Ojibway camp had come to a sudden end.

Every mother told her children: "Don't leave the camp! You must play in the middle of the village or the Sioux will kill you and scalp you!"

There was no more merry laughter and shouting of children. The little girls were so afraid that they seldom left the lodges all day, and the

boys no longer hunted blackbirds and gophers and squirrels, but slipped timidly from lodge to lodge like scared rabbits.

The women were so worried about their small babies that they were afraid to leave them in the tepees, but put them in canoes, which they anchored in the lake.

“There the Sioux will not be able to go and kill them,” they consoled each other, “and we shall at least save the small babies.”

Some of the men thought they ought to move the camp at once, but to this the older men as well as Netnowa were much opposed.

“If the Sioux intend to attack us they are surely watching our camp and they would ambush us on the trail and might kill us all, for we could not see them in the forest and could not defend ourselves. But if they attack us in this camp they cannot kill many of us and our men will all be ready to defend us. We must now stay in this camp until the Sioux have made their attack or have gone back to their own country.”

And so they decided to stay. But life in the camp was now very gloomy. The women were afraid to go visiting each other or to assemble for gossip in front of the tepees. Each squaw

gathered a few sticks of firewood near her tepee, there were no longer merry parties to go after good, dry wood such as every good Indian house-keeper wanted for her campfire. The men no longer brought home loads of good meat and told great hunting stories of big moose, elk and deer. They also were afraid to leave the village, for they knew that the Sioux were watching them and would kill and scalp any hunter who should venture into the forest by himself or in parties of twos or threes. So the grim hunters could do nothing but sit around day after day, awaiting the attack. Many times they cleaned their guns and sharpened their knives, and then sat in little groups talking with their hands on their guns and their knives and tomahawks in their belts. From time to time a few men would slip away into the forest at night, and during the day watch the trails leading to the camp or some of the streams close by, but those parties were always afraid of being cut off and killed and never went far from camp.

Once John joined one of these parties. They saw a man come down to the shore of a small pond and get a kettle of water. John's party crept cautiously up to that spot and again found a place

where four men had been sitting down. Their trail led into the underbrush among a grove of tall pines, where John's party was afraid to follow, knowing that the quietly hiding Sioux would be sure to see the moving Ojibway first. All felt sure that the four prowlers were Sioux, but whether any more Sioux were hiding in the neighborhood no one could tell. The next day six Ojibway warriors concealed themselves at this pond all day, but the wily Sioux, who were just as good warriors and just as cautious scouts and woodsmen as the Ojibway, did not appear. A large, fat deer came to drink in the pond, but the hunters did not dare to shoot it for fear of discovering themselves to their lurking enemies.

Thus time dragged wearily on for a week. Food was getting scarce in camp, for people who have to subsist on meat alone must eat a good deal of it.

The dreaded blow fell at dawn next morning. Just as the first small birds began to sing in the thickets, half a dozen shots rang through the forest, and the fearful Sioux warwhoop: "*Kechei! Kechei!*" made every child and woman tremble. The Sioux rushed into the tepee into which they had fired. Quicker than it can be told, two young

men, a woman, and a child were killed and scalped. The Ojibway men rushed out of their tents and fired a volley into the thicket after the fleeing Sioux, and several small scouting parties pursued them.

But so carefully had the Sioux planned both their attack and retreat that they were not even seen again, and so quickly had the blow fallen that the Ojibway were not even sure of the number of Sioux in the party. Some thought there had been only three, while others claimed there had been at least ten, as judged from the way they had rushed through the brush.

There was mourning and sadness in the Ojibway camp. The dead were buried and a little house of poplar poles was built over each grave.

Two days later, after leaving some food in the houses of the dead, all moved three-days' journey farther north and joined another Ojibway village. Here the news of the attack was received with great excitement, and Owabasse, the father of the two young men killed, declared that he must now lead a war party against the Sioux, to avenge the death of his sons and that of the woman and child who had been relatives of his.

CHAPTER XVI

THE WHITE BOY JOINS A WAR PARTY

It was not long before the terrors of the attack of the Sioux were no longer visible in the Ojibway camp. The boys and girls played, hunted or fished, the little children toddled about in camp, the women worked and gossiped and quarreled and occasionally even indulged in fights and the men went hunting or rested in the lodges after their hard and long journey in quest of meat. But under the surface smoldered the fire of hatred and revenge against the Sioux, the hereditary enemies of the Ojibway.

Once more stories of the warpath were almost the only subject of talk amongst the men, and the boys listened as eagerly to the tales of bloodshed and exaggerated bravery as white boys listen to stories of the great desperate struggle between North and South, and several men offered to join a war party with Owabasse whenever he was ready to lead them.

Some of the old men thought the small war par-

ties did no good, but only killed some good hunters and made so many more widows and orphans for the tribe to care for. Peshaubo said: "The Sioux and the Ojibway should make peace. Both the Ojibway and the Sioux are brave warriors and they accomplish nothing against each other. They only keep each other out of good hunting grounds that are a three-days' journey wide and reach from the River St. Croix to the Red River.

"In this great country," he continued, "the white-tailed deer are very numerous and the beaver people build their dams and houses on every stream and never hear the footsteps of a hunter. We should smoke the pipe of peace, and should both hunt in that land, for it is a good land. But now the beaver people laugh at us and say to each other in their own language that the Anishenaba, the Indians, are big fools to keep each other from taking the furs of the Ahmik people and the meat of the Wauwashkoshe."

When Peshaubo had spoken in this way, Owabasse smoked a long time in silence.

"My brother Peshaubo," he replied then, "is a wise man and a good hunter. He has seen the great forests around the big waters of Huron and Gitchegumee, and he has also hunted on the green

prairies on the River Assiniboin. He has sold many furs to the traders and has given his friends to drink of the water of the white men. His squaw and their sons live in their lodges on Lake Huron, and the Sioux have never caused his squaw to cry through the night. But the tears of my squaw flow every night, and she cries because she has no longer a son, and when we are old there will be nobody to hunt for us."

When Owabasse was silent all the warriors showed that they approved of his words and said: "Owabasse speaks the truth; the Sioux have done him a great wrong."

"Last night," Owabasse continued, "my oldest son came to me in my dream, and was very sad. He looked at me for a long time, and then he spoke thus:

"My father, you and my mother sleep quietly on your pukwi of rushes, but my brother and I cannot rest. In their camp on Kitchi-zibi, the Red River, the Sioux have danced around our scalps, and have said that the Ojibways are women, and that the Sioux will return and bring away some more scalps. The Sioux have forgotten the great battle of Mille Lacs, in which our forefathers killed a thousand Sioux and burned

all their lodges. If you do not go and punish the Sioux, my brother and I cannot lie down to rest, and the Sioux will get so bold that the Ojibways will have to hide in the bushes like wahboo, the rabbit.' "

An Indian takes plenty of time to deliberate, and it was not until the war party against the Sioux had been discussed for nearly a month that Owabasse announced that he would go on the war path when the new moon showed like a bent knife in the sky.

Once more the whole camp was all excitement. As was usual on all important questions, there were two parties. One thought it very unwise to go against the Sioux at this time. It would start the going of larger and larger war parties, they claimed, and the Ojibways would either have to drive out the Sioux or be driven out by them. The other party defended the idea that the Sioux must be taught to respect the Ojibways by prompt retaliation for every injury, but all agreed that Owabasse was doing the right thing according to ancient custom, that a man must redress any serious injury done to himself or his kin.

Such is the law of the forest and the law among

primitive people, and as there is no government with real authority among them, the law of self-preservation and self-redress is supreme. An Indian rarely forgets a friendly act and he seldom forgets or forgives an injury.

So when the August moon was as large as a bent knife Owabasse led four men on the warpath against the Sioux. The leader and three of his men were experienced warriors, but one was a novice, the white son of Netnowa.

Netnowa had been opposed to the war party. "I never saw any good come out of it," she protested; "but the men think they must keep up the old custom, and I shall let my son go, so the Ojibways cannot say that he has the heart of a rabbit, and I shall pray every night to the Great Manitou that he may return to me alive and unwounded.

"I am getting to be an old woman and if my son should be killed by the Sioux I shall be very lonesome."

The war party rode down a small stream that flowed westward into the Red River. When they entered the Red River they turned their canoes south toward the enemy's country. Late in the

afternoon they passed an inviting camp site and one of the men suggested that they stop there for the night.

“We must not stop there,” Owabasse replied in a low voice. “It is a haunted place. The Sioux killed seven Ojibways there when I was a boy, and if we stopped there the spirits would not let us sleep.”

John was glad to hear Owabasse’s decision, for after his experience with the Jebi he had no desire to test again the truth or falsehood of Ojibway beliefs.

For camp Owabasse selected a spot under some tall elms where a fine spring flowed out of the bank and where dry wood was plentiful. For their supper they cooked some wild rice which they had brought with them and three wild ducks which they had shot on the way. They were, according to their reckoning, still four-days’ journey from the nearest Sioux camp and therefore felt no need of traveling in silence. After supper they kept a cheerful fire burning and Owabasse told of his experience on former war parties and of adventures in hunting and trapping.

For John, the journey was connected with many hardships and inconveniences. As a novice on

the warpath he had to keep his face blackened and wear a headdress. His knife and cup could not be touched by any other member of the party, and when they landed he had to walk behind the other men. If the mosquitoes or black flies troubled him he was not allowed to scratch his head or his body with his hands, but had to use a stick or small piece of wood for that purpose. He was not allowed to either eat or drink during the day and could not sit down for a rest on land. He either had to stay in the canoe or stand on land with his face turned toward the Ojibway country, so that the Great Spirit might know that he wished to see his own people again.

But even the old warriors rigidly observed certain customs. When the party landed to explore the woods or the prairie for signs of Sioux, they did not follow any trail but crept silently through the underbrush and the tall weeds. "On the trail we might suddenly meet the Sioux or be ambushed by them," was Owabasse's explanation of this custom.

Their bowls of wood and of birch-bark were marked in such a way that they could always use one side on their going trip and the other side on their way home.

Around their night camp they made a little square or oblong of bushes or weeds with an entrance toward the enemy's country. In this enclosure all had to sleep. The leader and the experienced warriors lay nearest the door, while the black-faced man or men slept in the rear, but all had their faces turned toward their own country. A hard rule said that a man must not change his position all night; no matter how sore his bones and muscles felt or how hard a root or stone pressed against him.

"Our fathers made that rule," Owabasse told them, "so that the warriors should not sleep too long and be surprised by the Sioux."

Under no condition must one step over the legs or hands or over the gun, knife, or vessel belonging to another. If this was done inadvertently the offender had to allow himself to be violently thrown upon the ground and John was given several hard bumping falls the first evening, which caused loud laughter to the old warriors, but made his head and all his bones ache; however, he bore it all bravely, for thus was he initiated to be a man and a warrior.

On the evening of the third day Owabasse sent one of the men ahead to prepare the Cleared

Ground, where Owabasse could perform the *Kozan-bun-Zichegun*, the divination by means of which he was to learn the strength and the position of the Sioux camp.

John was not allowed to go with the maker of the Cleared Ground, and it was with much interest and curiosity that, a little later, he saw what the man had done.

He had cleared a small piece of ground completely of weeds, grass, and brush, and had broken up the ground as for a garden bed, and had enclosed the ground with a fence of small poles.

When the place was ready Owabasse sat down in the end, facing toward the Sioux and began to sing and pray, while the other men made camp in the usual way, but as they were now getting close to the enemy's country, they built only a small fire, which they put out as soon as they had done their cooking.

After darkness fell, the men in camp rolled up in their blankets; but for some time John found no sleep. Only a few rods away Owabasse continued his songs and prayers in a low, deep tone. From the marshes close by came the quack of wild ducks, the cry of mud-hens and other sounds

of the night. Overhead the wakeful boy recognized the swishing wings of a loon and was startled by its weird, piercing laughter; and from a distance out of the dark sky came the raucous, ghostlike squawks of a solitary night heron.

The moon was hidden by dark clouds, and far toward the south gleams of lightning flashed up now and then and when John pressed his ear close to the ground, he thought he could hear distant thunder.

The air lay sultry and still over the river, but from time to time little gusts of wind rustled the tall golden-rods, sunflowers and other weeds around the camp. And every time the sleepless boy heard the sudden rustle in the weeds, he felt the gooseflesh creep up his back, and all the hair on his head seemed to rise, for every time he expected a Sioux warrior to spring at him with tomahawk and scalping-knife; and he lay with one hand on his hatchet and the other on his hunting-knife. His companions, John felt, also lay awake.

At last—it must have been near midnight—Owabasse ceased singing and praying and called his men to come and smoke.

They used a few dead weeds for making a dim

light and Owabasse showed them the trail which two small stones, always used in the *Kozan-bun-Zichegun*, had made in moving across the fine earth. From the position and the tracks of these pebbles Owabasse explained that he knew they would come upon a Sioux camp some time the next day, that their camp was on the west side of the river and contained about six lodges.

How Owabasse could know these things and whether they were really true, and how the pebbles had moved across the fine earth, John could not understand, but he knew that he was not expected to ask. The Indians seemed not to doubt the predictions of Owabasse and betrayed neither fear nor joy.

The next day they paddled in silence and looked carefully ahead on every bend of the river. In the middle of the afternoon Owabasse stopped paddling and said:

“We must now hide our canoes and walk up the river.”

After they had walked for some time he stopped and climbed into an elm tree through whose branches he carefully scanned the country toward the south.

“My friends,” he spoke when he again stood

on the ground, "we are now only a few measures from the camp of the Roasters. I have seen the smoke of their fires."

Again they silently threaded their way through brush and tall weeds, and within an hour they crept to the edge of a hazel thicket and before them on the west bank of the river lay the camp of their enemies, which consisted of nine large lodges of buffalo skins.

Until dark they watched their enemies. In fact, it was not safe to leave their hiding place until night, for there was but little timber on the river and a small ravine running east just behind them was fringed by nothing but broken clumps and thickets of hazel, sumach and wild plums. Once two hunters, each with a string of wild ducks, passed within twenty-five paces of the lurking Ojibways. One of the men seized his gun, but Owabasse motioned him not to shoot.

"We could not have gotten away," he whispered after the two hunters had crossed the river. "There are twenty warriors in their camp, and they have canoes enough so that all could cross the river at once. We must wait for a better time."

For two days and parts of the nights they

watched the Sioux camp. Their provisions were almost gone, and they were nearly worn out by loss of sleep and constant watching. For food they had only a little dried venison and some parched rice, and building a fire was out of the question.

Their opportunity came the third morning. Two men came across the river to hunt ducks on a marsh, while several other hunters had gone off to the west of the camp. Like panthers of the forest the Ojibways followed the two duck hunters a mile and fired at them before the surprised Sioux had time to raise their guns. Then with a loud "*Sasakwe! Sasakwe!*" the warwhoop of the Ojibway, Owabasse and his three men rushed at the fallen Sioux. But one of the Sioux was only slightly wounded and fiercely grappled with Owabasse the minute the shouting Ojibway touched him. Had not John come to Owabasse's assistance the Ojibways would have returned without their leader, for the Sioux was a powerful man and much younger than Owabasse.

When the dead Sioux had been scalped the Ojibways left a number of jebings or memorials near the dead. These things had been given them by friends who had lost relatives by the hands of

the Sioux and in this way the spirits of the departed were supposed to be made happy. Owabasse placed a lock from the hair of his sons in the death wound of the big Sioux.

This done, they hurried to their canoes and paddled down the stream as fast as they could until dark.

All fatigue was forgotten in the flush of victory over their hated enemies. While two ate their share of the last scraps of venison the others continued to paddle, and when a man was thirsty he dipped out a drink of river water.

When it grew too dark for traveling they stopped and slept a few hours, but fully an hour before daylight they were again going north with the current. Shortly before noon they shot some wild ducks, and now they thought themselves far enough out of danger to stop and roast the game and enjoy the first full meal since four days ago.

After this they traveled a little more leisurely, for they reasoned that the Sioux would not be likely to follow them so close to the Ojibway territory, even if they had found their trail. They thought it very likely that the Sioux had at first believed that the firing had been done by their own hunters shooting ducks. In that case they would

not have learned of the death of the two men until late at night and could not have started in pursuit of Owabasse's party until some time the next forenoon.

On the third evening Owabasse built a fire, and after they cooked the game they had killed on the way, told and lived over the events of their successful raid.

That according to Christian and white man's morals they had committed plain murder did not occur to them. They had followed the custom of their fathers and had avenged the death of their friends on the hated Sioux, who had fallen upon a village that had never done any harm to them.

CHAPTER XVII

THE WHITE BOY BECOMES A MAN

WHEN the news of Owabasse's successful war party reached the Ojibway camp and when it was learned that the four warriors were now encamped within a mile of the village, the men began to beat their drums and every one who had heard the report rushed to his nearest friends and exclaimed:

“Have you heard the good news? Our men have returned with two Sioux scalps. None of our people were killed, but Owabasse has his left arm bandaged, where a big Sioux cut him. Nunduwah, the white boy, saved Owabasse from being killed by the big Roaster so Nunduwah is now a man and a Chippewa warrior and may wear feathers in his war bonnet.”

Then they all prepared to bring the victorious warriors into camp. Owabasse had stretched the two Sioux scalps on little wooden frames and had tied each to a long pole. The victorious warriors had donned their war bonnets and by the number

of feathers in them a child could tell how many terrible Sioux each brave warrior had killed. The dishes and bowls, which they had used on the trip, they had thrown away as they prepared to enter the village; for that was the custom handed down by their forefathers.

There was more noise and excitement in the Ojibway camp at the return of the war party than there is in a white town at a circus parade.

Ahead of all marched Owabasse, proudly displaying seven large feathers in his bonnet, his Indian companions followed with four, while John was allowed two, having been present at the killing of two of the hated Roasters. The men beat their drums, the women lifted up their little children and whispered, "See the scalp of the Big Roaster! He can't hurt you any more."

The boys and girls ran about with great excitement calling to each other:

"See the scalps! See Nunduwah! He's a warrior now!" And the small boys wished that they were grown up and could have gone with Owabasse on the warpath like Nunduwah the Big White Boy. And even the dogs caught the excitement and ran and yelped and barked and fought, for they knew that the beating of the

drums meant a feast and one of those rare occasions when there would be plenty of bones and scraps for the always hungry Indian dogs, who otherwise know only by a lucky find the meaning of a full stomach.

Only two people looked with disapproval at all the feasting and wild dancing and listened in moody silence to the savage recitals of the fight; old Peshaubo and Netnowa.

“It is all bad,” murmured Peshaubo when he had at last retired to the tepee of his old kinswoman. “Next summer the Sioux will fall upon us with a larger party if we stay here, and if they cannot find us they will take their revenge on the Ojibway at Gull Lake or Mille Lacs who live nearest to them, and then our women will be crying as the Sioux women are crying now. We should do as the white men do. They are not always at war, and when they have had a war they make peace and stop killing each other, and so the whites grow in numbers like the leaves on the trees till there will be no land left for the Indians to go to.”

“Yes,” replied Netnowa, “it is all bad. My son has now tasted war and he will want to go again, and the Sioux will learn of my white son

and will hide in the forest till they can kill him. It is all bad. We should not tell our children to hate and kill the Sioux. We should tell them as the black-coated fathers do on Lake Huron, that the Indians should love each other and live in peace. Perhaps the white people love each other and that is the reason why they are growing so numerous. When I was a little girl there were no white people on Lake Huron and at Michilimackinac. Now there are so many that I cannot count them. I shall tell my son what the black-coated fathers say about love and peace."

But his old Indian mother was mistaken about John's love for the warpath. He had gone for the love of adventure and to be counted a man among the Indians. He had greatly enjoyed the journey as if it had been a dangerous hunt after wolf or bear, but the killing and scalping of the Sioux had disgusted him. At that moment he would have gladly left the party, and only the danger of Owabasse aroused him to quick and vigorous action. In the matter of hating the Sioux, he had not become an Ojibway, and the Indian mode of warfare seemed to him just brutal murder, and he resolved never again to join any war party if he could possibly avoid it.

One effect, however, the war party did have on him. He often had marveled at the wonderful attachment the Indians displayed for their relatives, and this war party had again shown him how much kinship counts with them. It was for his slain son that Owabasse had gone against the Sioux, although he was a peaceful man who had never been known to quarrel with anybody.

"I am now a man," the boy said to himself. He had lost count, but knew that he was either nineteen or twenty years old. "I can go where I please. I must now find out whether my white sister is still alive. My mother said a Cree woman had bought her and taken her north. I must learn if that is true and where she is living, if she is still alive."

That it was his duty to find his sister, John felt very clearly, but how to go about it was a question over which he puzzled on many a lone hunting trip and on many a night as he lay wrapped up in his blanket, before the fatigue of the hunt caused him to fall asleep.

Once he was gone three weeks, and nobody but Netnowa knew where he had gone; he had only said to her: "I am going to hunt up north on

the Lake of the Sandhills, and see the great woods on the Rapid River.”

“Oh, my son,” Netnowa pleaded with him, “that lake is very big, and many a Chippewa hunter has been drowned in it. The big waves spring up so quick, that you cannot reach the shore before your canoe is filled with water. My son, I have watched over you while you were a boy; do not let the waves take you from me when you have grown to be a man, for I wish to lean on you when I am old, and wish to cook your food till I am too feeble to bring wood to the tepee.”

“My mother,” replied John, “I shall come back when the moon is full. I shall not let the rolling waves fill my canoe, and when your hair is all white you shall warm yourself at the fire in my tepee. But now I must go to hunt where the Big Grassy River creeps into the Lake of the Sandhills, and where the pines grow on the thousand rock islands of the big lake, and in the dark forest on the Rapid River; for a good hunter must know the country of his people, and there are many regions of the Land of the Chippewa that I have never seen, because when I was only a boy I could not travel far from the worn trails.”

In those days the Chippewa, or Ojibway, as they called themselves, roamed over an immense territory extending from Lake Huron on the east to the Assiniboin and Mouse River on the west. They hunted moose and deer in Northern Michigan, in the northern halves of Wisconsin and Minnesota, while in North Dakota and Manitoba they found buffalo and elk. Beavers were well distributed over a great part of the region, and the streams and lakes teemed with fish, as many of them do even to this day.

Immense and wild as was the Ojibway country, John felt satisfied that Ellen was not anywhere among the Ojibway. The Indians were great travelers and all important and curious news was carried to every village. There were trading posts scattered along their great route of travel from Mackinac to Mouse River and Lake Winnipeg, and John knew many of the white traders personally. A white woman living among the Chippewas in those days would have been such an interesting person that both traders and Indians would have known about her and told each other about her.

The young man also felt satisfied that Ellen did not live with the Assiniboins. He had met

many members of this tribe, who were friends of the Ojibways, on the Red and Assiniboin Rivers, and he understood their language fairly well. Only a very few of these people, who had been with their Ojibway friends to Mackinac, had ever seen a white woman.

Near the mouth of the Big Grassy, John found a small village of Indians who, although they were strangers to him, had heard of him. They received him very hospitably, and he hunted woodland caribou and moose with them.

Did they know any white woman who lived north somewhere, with the Crees? They did not, their chief said. Some of their Cree friends who lived near Norway House, north of Lake Winnipeg, had told of a white woman who lived farther north; but nobody in their village had ever seen a white woman.

A day later, John left his friends at the Big Grassy, after he had exchanged a knife for a bag of Indian corn which the Indians had raised on an island in the lake. In those days the small patches of corn of the Chippewas on the islands in Lake of the Woods were the northernmost cornfields in America.

After he had also made a short trip to the Big

Bog country south of the lower Rainy River, he started for his mother's camp.

Netnowa was overjoyed when she saw her son come back from his first long solitary hunting trip.

"Now, my son," she greeted him, "you shall take a long rest and sleep on the new mat of cedar bark I have woven for you. I am glad that you wish to be a great hunter, and wish to visit the totems and lakes of the great Chippewa nation. But I have prayed to the Great Spirit that he may kill the love of war in your heart, and that you will not again go on the warpath against the Sioux. For your old mother's heart suffered great pain while you were on the long journey with Owabasse. The black-coated fathers say," she added with some hesitation, "the Indians should love each other."

To tell the Chippewa of those days that they should love the Sioux, sounded as strange to the warriors as if one were to tell white women that they should love snakes.

"My mother," John replied earnestly, "I do not hate the Sioux. They have never done me harm and I do not wish to go to war against them. But you must now make ready to move camp after

two sleeps, for we should go and camp by ourselves on the little streams of the Rapid River, where there is much poplar for moose and beaver, and great bogs for the caribou. I have seen the country and know that it is good, and you and my sisters shall have so much meat to smoke and to dry that nobody in our tepee shall go hungry for a single day all winter."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE GREAT HUNT

SINCE Netnowa's son had become a man, he was the head of the family, and as he had often proved himself a good hunter, the three women in the camp did not object to moving to another camping place with him. If a single family did strike good hunting grounds, it was easier to secure a supply of meat, but if the game failed, an isolated family or a lone hunter were often exposed to the danger of actual starvation; for in very cold weather a starving and poorly clad Indian very soon became too weak to hunt, and for that reason several families generally camped together.

Netnowa's family on this occasion passed from Red River to Lake of the Woods by way of the Big Muskeg trail, a portage the whites never used. Here the Indian women, inured to all kinds of hardship, wading knee-deep, laughingly pushed the canoes for miles over the submerged peat moss. Even in late fall, when the water was ice cold, they preferred this portage to the

round-about way past Fort Garry and up the Winnipeg River with its many rapids and difficult portages.

From Lake of the Woods they entered the broad Rainy River, paddled up stream about fifteen miles, and then entered the Rapid River coming from the south. At the headwaters of this stream, about half way between Lake of the Woods and the great Red Lake, they made their camp.

This region is even at the time of this writing one of the wildest in the great North Star State, where moose and deer, wolf and bear are still abundant, and where the last herd of elk in Minnesota and a remnant herd of woodland caribou have thus far found a refuge from both red and white hunters.

It will, however, not remain a wilderness much longer. The Big Bog is being drained, and homesteaders and pulp men are clearing away the forest, and when the present generation of boys and girls has grown up, cattle will graze where now moose, elk and caribou are browsing. The big antlered game and wolf and bear will have disappeared.

But, when Netnowa and her white son pitched

their tepees on Rapid River, about a hundred years ago, the country was a wilderness such as would gladden the heart of any hunter.

On the white trunks of the poplars the young hunter found the scratches made by the black bear. These scratches are his challenge, and read to all other bears: "I'm king here. If you can reach as high as I, look me up and we'll fight it out!"

In the magnificent mixed forest of birch, poplar and oak he found the underbrush heavily browsed by moose all along the banks of the streams. "The greatest moose woods I ever saw!" exclaimed John.

Rabbits scurried into the brush everywhere, and from their abundance the young hunter concluded that many a furtive lynx was hiding in the dense dark forests of spruce and cedar.

After the tepees were set up John made a reconnoitering trip to the Big Bog southward. And here again he found a hunter's paradise. Among the scattered tamarack and spruces ran the trails of herds of caribou where the roving animals had eaten the gray-bearded lichens off the scrubby trees. Still farther southward, where the big bog was covered with a foot or two

of water, thousands of aquatic birds spattered, quacked, and screamed, and among the ducks the hunter's keen eye recognized big dark geese and splendid white swans as well as a few tall cranes.

"I'll soon have all the meat my family will need for a long time," thought John. "The game is not wild because no hunter has been here for many years. The country is too far away from the big trails and canoe routes of our people."

Netnowa also liked the country very much.

"My son," she remarked, as she handed him a dish of boiled meat, "I have found many beavers on the little streams. I shall make some warm beaver coats for all of us and you can make a big pack for the traders. This is a very good country, and I think white men will never come here. It is too wild and too hard to find. And I feel sure that no Sioux has ever been in these forests and that they could never find us here. My son, your old mother is very happy here with her children."

And then John, who was now well acquainted with the habits of all game and the best ways of approaching it, began to hunt as he had never hunted before.

“Never fire until you feel sure of killing your game,” was a rule from which he never departed and which had already made him one of the best hunters in the Chippewa country. In his double-barreled muzzle-loader he used either large bullets or shot. But ammunition was expensive in those days and often hard to get, therefore the hunter practiced the most rigid economy in the use of it. During the first week of his great hunt he killed four moose with one bullet. In killing the first three moose, the bullet had not gone through the animal, so John cut it out and used it again. The fourth time when he killed a young bull at very close range, the bullet passed through the animal and was lost. Shooting only at close range, fifty yards or less, compelled him to use all his skill and woodcraft in approaching the game, and many a time he lay concealed in a thicket for hours at a time, patiently waiting for a moose to come within sure killing distance. Only an experienced hunter knows what it means to fight mosquitoes and flies for an hour while one ever keeps a sharp eye on the movements of the game. At other times he made tedious detours of several miles to get the wind in his favor or to avoid approaching the moose over an open

bog. When the day ended, the young hunter had worked as hard and as persistently as any farmer boy who has pitched hay through a long, hot July day, but he had made his killing and came to camp ravenously hungry and happy.

Netnowa and her two daughters worked as hard as John. Wherever John had killed, they made a temporary camp, cut the meat into strips and smoked and dried it on a frame of green sticks. Meat prepared in this way keeps indefinitely, and Netnowa had seen so much starvation among her people that nothing but scraps and clean bones were left for the wolves and bears and other flesh-eating prowlers of the forest.

When the moose began to grow scarce near the Rapid River camp, John and the three women built a hunting camp on a spruce ridge near the Big Bog for the purpose of hunting woodland caribou, of which a hundred or more roamed back and forth in that wild region. By the same hard hunting which he had practiced in the pursuit of moose, John was able to approach these wary creatures through a little spruce island. His first two shots killed two fat animals and when a few minutes later the confused herd passed on the other side of the island, he had already loaded

his gun, had crept through the thicket, and killed two more before the game got out of reach. Quick shooting with a modern repeating rifle is comparatively easy, but quick shooting with an old flint-lock muzzle-loader is an art. John had made his bag of four caribou only by carrying two bullets in his mouth and dropping them on top of the powder without a moment's delay.

At the end of three weeks the young hunter had killed about half a dozen moose and as many caribou, and now felt that the three women had an abundance of provisions for a long time and might even feed some hungry, starving visitors, who were sure to call and stay indefinitely.

Such hunting old Netnowa had never seen, and, Indian fashion, she had constructed in her own mind, the motive for John's feverish activity without asking him any questions.

But one evening, when John had not been hunting and he and Netnowa were alone in the tepee, she spoke out about his plans.

"My son," she said as she put away the birch-bark bowl out of which the lad had just eaten a big meal of moose meat, "I know that you are going away. Are you going back to the white people? You should not leave your old mother

who brought you away from the Shawnees, who were cruel to you when you were a helpless boy. My son, do not go away from your old mother!" she repeated, and tears ran down her wrinkled cheeks.

"My mother," replied the boy, hardly able to speak, "I must be a man and go to find my sister. But, if the big waters and the great forests do not swallow me, I shall come back to you," and then he arose quickly and went down the trail in the dark forest. It had never occurred to him how hard it would be to leave this woman who had been a real mother to him for almost ten years, and who had often risked her life that he might not suffer.

Netnowa, of course, did understand John's decision to go into the Cree country in order to look for his sister, but he had other news, which disturbed and excited him even more than his intended trip to the Far North.

About a month ago he and Netnowa's family had camped for a few days near the Hudson Bay trading house at the mouth of the Rainy River.

To-day, as one paddles down the Rainy River, one might pass this spot unawares. Of the old log-cabin store not a vestige is left, and some say

that even the site has been carried away by the river. The winter cabin of a poor Chippewa widow is the only structure that marks this historic camping-ground. In summer the cabin is deserted, except, when the widow and her little girls and some squaw friends come to pick the wild cherries, plums and grapes that grow abundantly in the woods near by. For a few days the women remain on the sunny, flower-studded clearing of the old camping-ground, then they vanish into the forests, or among the islands of the Lake of the Woods, and are as completely lost to the world as the dead in the leaf and moss-covered graves, of which scores and scores are concealed in the green woods around the old Chippewa camp.

It was at this camping-place that John heard the most stirring news that had ever come to him while he had been living with the Indians. An old Hudson Bay man, who had recently returned from Montreal and Detroit, and had stopped for two weeks visiting old friends at Mackinac, told John that six or seven years ago a young white man from Kentucky had been at Mackinac looking for a lost brother and sister, who, he said, were twins, and he said his own name was David

Runnels. He also told that he and his father had traced the lost twins as far as Detroit, and that his mother would not be content until he had gone at least as far as Mackinac.

At first John was speechless when he heard this news, then he cried out:

“Mishawbo lied to me! He said he had killed all my people. I will go back to Kentucky, and see my mother and father and then I will seek out Mishawbo and kill him!”

“You needn’t kill him,” replied the old Hudson Bay man, “he’s dead. He was hanged for murder at Detroit two years ago.”

“And where is Kishawko?” John asked with a trembling voice.

“Nobody knows,” old Pierre answered. “He’s an outlaw amongst both whites and Indians. The sheriffs of the whites are looking for him, and if the Indians find him they will kill him, for he has committed murders and outrages among both whites and Indians. When his father was arrested near Detroit, Kishawko disappeared, and no one has seen him since!”

That night John never slept a wink. He knew old Pierre had told the truth, for he was known as a truthful man to both traders and Indians,

and he knew the country and the traders from Montreal to Fort Garry. What would Netnowa say when she learned that his white parents were still alive and that he must go back to see them? He had decided not to tell her until he had been north and found his sister.

But why had he never heard of his brother's visit to Mackinac? He concluded that this visit must have occurred about the time that he and Netnowa lived with Peshaubo on the Assiniboin, two hundred miles west of Lake Winnipeg. Since that time they had never lived east of the Red River country, so it was quite natural that his brother should lose all trace of himself and Ellen at Mackinac.

CHAPTER XIX

ON A LONG JOURNEY

WHEN it came to preparing for an important event, Netnowa's son showed all the impatience of a white boy. An Indian would have spent a week or perhaps two in preparation for such a trip, and in meditating about it and talking it over with his friends. This young white hunter began loading his canoe the second morning after he had had the short talk with his mother, who wished to keep him a few days longer. He argued impatiently with his mother while he was loading his canoe:

"My mother, why should I wait? I have thought a long time of finding my sister, and now I can wait no longer. I must push down this stream to-day," and he continued to load his canoe.

A small sack of cracked corn, a bag of dried meat, and a bladder of moose tallow he packed in the bottom, well forward. A small bag of salt

and a package of tea his mother gave him as special luxuries.

"These, my son," she said, "I have saved for you, and nobody knew that I had them. When you are very tired, you must drink a little of the white man's tea; but when you are not very tired you must boil the leaves of the Labrador tea, the 'fuzzy bush' and the sweet fern as the Indians do. I also had hidden some sugar for you, but the black ants found it and carried most of it away, but I give you what they left."

For dishes the hunter took only a small iron kettle, a few birch-bark cups and a wooden spoon, while half a dozen pairs of moose-hide moccasins, a pair of leggins, and a buckskin shirt were carefully packed in the bow. Over these things he laid two blankets and covered the whole with a large piece of canvas which he had bought for three beaver skins. When he also brought a pair of snowshoes from the tepee, the tears came to the eyes of his old mother who complained: "My son, you will be gone a long time and I fear I shall never see you again."

His gun he stowed away under the blankets, but a hatchet, a bow and some arrows he laid in the stern of the canoe where he could quickly

reach them. Lead, powder, steel, and punk he carried in a bag on his person, while a sharp hunting-knife hung in a case from his belt. When he was ready to push off, his mother arose and said:

“Wait a little, my son; you must take one more thing with you,” and she returned from the tepee with a woven mat of cedar bark.

“On this you must sleep,” she said, “so that sickness from the wet earth may not creep into your bones and make your arms too sore for paddling or your knees too stiff for walking.”

And when the boy stood ready to push off his canoe she embraced and kissed him, sobbing: “My son, my son, you are going on a long, dangerous journey and your old mother cannot go with you, but I shall pray to the Great Manitou every night that no evil man or spirit may do you harm, that the waves may not swallow you and that you may not lose the trail in the forests. I shall offer Him some tobacco that He may bring you back safe, for I shall be very lonely and think of you every day till you return!”

Then the boy pushed off into the stream and the eyes of his mother followed him till he disappeared among the poplars around the bend.

The young hunter, once fairly under way,

pushed his craft down stream with a light heart. Tall white poplars, overhanging birches, red-berried bush-cranberries, killikinnick, and hazel were mirrored in the placid stream till the ripples of the canoe broke the pictures; and in the bushes flitted and called flocks of chickadees and pretty little warblers who had already begun the long journey southward. Water-lilies, white and yellow, floated on quiet pools, and here and there the tall wild rice had hung its anthers to the breeze. But the lone traveler gave all this beauty scarcely a passing notice, although his clear blue eyes keenly searched the banks as his bark canoe swiftly rounded bend after bend. A moose, which was pulling up lilies and other water plants he greeted with a ringing Chippewa war yell, and when the great beast floundered out of the stream and crashed madly into the brush, ringing shouts and laughter of the youth echoed from bank to bank. He was in high spirits now. At last he had started on the journey of which he had dreamed so many a night, and which in youthful fancy he had planned a thousand times on many a lone hunting trip.

At the big moose he never aimed a gun, for although it would have been a dead shot he could

not have stopped to make use of the meat. However, when a little later a well-known clucking and "put-put-put" betrayed the presence of a brood of grouse, he quickly pushed his canoe ashore, and before the birds took wing he had killed three with bow and arrow.

"They will feed me to-day," he murmured, as he picked up birds and arrows, "and I have not wasted any powder on them, either."

Before the sun showed the noon hour, the canoe glided into the broad Rainy River. It did not occur to him to stop for dinner as a white hunter would have done, for in the matter of meals he had acquired the habits of the Indians who have no regular time for eating, but eat when they are hungry and have secured fish or game for a meal. On the Rainy River he passed several flocks of wild ducks, but on this highway of Indian travel the game was too shy to be killed with bow and arrow, and for such small game he could not spare any "traders' ammunition," which had to last him the whole long journey to Norway House and back again, if ever he did come back. When he might return God only knew. Perhaps he would return on foot over the ice after lakes and streams were frozen, perhaps he would be delayed

till next spring, and a vague apprehension of the danger of the long journey over strange waters and trails and to strange people crept over him. Netnowa's foreboding sense of danger was perhaps a prophecy after all. She had often foretold things in a way that puzzled him, and all the Indians believed that she possessed the gift of prophecy. Never had he seen her so sad and moved as she was on his departure, except when her husband, Taweninne, and her son, Keewatin, died, but that happened long, long ago, when he hunted only small game and was afraid to go far away from camp.

However, all sad thoughts soon fled from his mind as he fairly shot along with the current and a favorable wind, which made the work of propelling his neatly-balanced canoe mere play for his strong arms.

He was on his way to find Ellen! How would she look? She must be far more beautiful than any Indian girl! Since he left her, a little girl playing in camp at Lake Huron, years and years ago, he had seen only three white women at Mackinac, and that was about ten years ago.

Impatient to go forward, he made the water ripple and gurgle at the bow of his light bark

craft, and deep swirling eddies danced up-stream after each long, powerful stroke of his paddle.

When the sun began to hide behind the tall poplars and pines along the river bank, he did not yet feel any fatigue, but a sharp feeling of hunger told him that it was time to camp. Moreover a sea of waving green rushes was now spread out before him, and in the distance northward loomed up the dazzling sand-dunes in the great Lake of the Sandhills, so he made his first camp on a level, grassy plot near the mouth of the river.

Within a few minutes a fire was started, the three grouse were quickly skinned, and by the time the canoe was safely turned over on the bank, his baggage packed away under it and his mat spread on the sleeping place, the hunter's supper was boiling in the iron kettle. Young grouse, boiled with a little salt and flour, is good enough to tempt any man, and the hungry traveler could scarcely wait till the meat was done. To pick clean the bones of two grouse was short work and he drank his fill of the finely flavored broth, which would have put to shame the chicken broth of many a French chef.

When darkness fell over the forest the boy hunter put a few more sticks on the fire, and as

they lighted up the big hazel brush behind him he rolled up in his blankets, Indian fashion, with his head tucked in. For a few minutes his mind continued on the great journey, but before he had pushed his canoe through the rushes at the mouth of the river he was fast asleep.

The wolves began to howl dismally near camp, but howling wolves could no more wake the tired hunter than the barking of a neighbor's dog will rouse a farm boy who has trudged behind the plow or pitched bundles all day. Stories of wolves attacking campers in midsummer are still good copy for sensational editors and are still believed by ignorant city folk, but experienced hunters and Indians laugh at them, and are no more afraid of being attacked by wolves in summer than they fear being eaten up by rabbits.

CHAPTER XX

ON THE LAKE OF THE SANDHILLS

JOHN was up at daybreak. A small fire had soon heated for his breakfast the broth and one grouse which was left over from the preceding day. For a youth of his age and for one who has none of the mixed and well-balanced food of civilization, one young grouse is a scant meal.

To draw on his stock of dried meat and corn and moose tallow was out of the question at this stage of his journey. These things he had taken along merely as emergency rations, to be used in case the hunter were disabled by sickness or accident, or in case game should utterly fail him for several days.

He had to find his meat as he went, or go hungry. In order that he might travel as fast as possible, his plan was to fish or hunt a day in favorable places and then push on with food enough for several days. But both game and fish are often most erratically distributed, as every hunter and fisherman knows only too well. In a place where one season wild meat is abundant, let

the natural condition change ever so little, and the hunter will go hungry, where in another season he could have taken fish or game by the wagon load.

The great Lake of the Sandhills, or Lake of the Woods, is a favorite body of water for sturgeon, and a century ago the Indians and traders often speared sturgeon in large numbers, many of which weighed over a hundred and fifty pounds.

Several places where the current glided over sandy points and rocks, were well known to John as likely places for sturgeon, and along the edges of the pipestem reeds big pickerel were common. True, the time, late in August, was not the season for sturgeon, but if he could only spear one or two and a few big pickerel he would have enough meat for some time, and he decided to put in a day fishing. All day he slowly paddled from one likely place to another without even seeing one of the big meat fish of the Chippewa. He did pick up half a dozen pickerel, but they would last only a few days. The sun was just disappearing behind a bank of clouds in the west when he at last landed a small fifty-pound sturgeon. He had barely finished cleaning the fish when he saw that it was high time to find a good camp and shelter

for the night; for a big storm was rapidly approaching from the west, and he knew what it meant to be caught in a storm on the open stretch of this lake, "La Grande Traverse," as the French traders called the twenty miles of open water between the present provinces of Manitoba on the west, Ontario on the east and Minnesota on the south.

He pulled up his canoe behind some bushes on Five-Mile Point which runs into the lake from the Minnesota shore and where to-day a big commercial fishery is situated which often sets out miles of nets for pike, pickerel, and golden-eye, and the few sturgeon that are still left in the lake.

This evening he turned his canoe on its side and piled his baggage under it at one end, and over the whole he staked the big piece of canvas. Then he hastily broiled several large pieces of sturgeon and ate them without salt, for this precious commodity he intended to use only to season his broth when he ate meat or fish boiled. However, the lack of salt he did not feel a hardship—he had often gone without salt for months at a time—for many of the far Northern Indians hardly knew what salt was before the white traders came among them.

His evening meal was scarcely finished when the storm broke upon him and he crept under his canoe, a little tired and quite sleepy after the first full meal he had eaten since he left his mother's camp.

But the storm swept over him with such fury that although he was used to all kinds of rough weather, he could not sleep, and almost believed the Chippewa superstition that "La Grande Traverse" was haunted by evil spirits, and that no hunter should camp on Five-Mile Point, which cuts off a sheltered, rush-grown bay from the Grande Traverse.

"Once," the Indians told, "a man and his wife left their baby asleep in its Indian cradle behind a bush on the point while they went off to spear sturgeon. Before they could return a fearful storm arose, and when the anxious parents did come back the child was nowhere to be seen, but over the spot where they had left it the waves rolled knee deep, and since then the lost child may be heard crying for its mother whenever a storm sweeps over the Big Traverse and makes the rushes sing with a dull, deep roar."

Through the rolling, rumbling, and crashing of the thunder, John thought he heard the pitiful

cries of the lost child, and by the flashing glare and fitful flicker of the lightning he even imagined seeing the child reach his hands out of the seething, tumbling waves. The whirling black clouds poured such a flood of splashing storm-lashed rain upon his bark and canvas shelter, and waves, rushes, bushes and trees made such a wild deafening noise about him, that even the crashes of thunder were almost drowned in the mingled uproar. Soon the frightened lad saw with horror that the water had crept up to within a boat-length of his tent. Had there been any higher land to run to he would have left everything and run. The panic of loneliness fell upon him. If he had only taken his brother, Womegew, with him! Even if he was an arrant coward who was always ready to lie down and die, whenever they did get into a difficult situation! If the water kept on rising, he would surely drown! With horror he thought of his experience on the Island of the Two Dead and he had no doubt that every incident of the story of the "Lost Child" was true. For during his life with the Chippewa he had imbibed so much Indian superstition that he failed to realize that the storm, in the most natural way, was driving the

water into the bay and piling it up, so to speak, against the current of Rainy River.

Thus he lay a most terrible long hour, and in the gleam of the lightning watched the water creep within a few feet of his lair.

But at last the violence of the storm passed, the water began to recede slowly, and the tired hunter fell into a fitful sleep. In his dreams he was carried away by the ever-rising flood, and he sought for the lost child among the dull moaning rushes of the bay.

When he awoke it was daylight. The wind was still blowing a gale and over the Big Traverse, the breakers rolled and rolled with long white lines of seething crests and with evil-looking abrupt fronts, man high. No canoe could live on those waves. So he prepared to rest and smoke his fish till wind and waves had calmed down.

But with the return of daylight and after a night's sleep his courage had returned.

"I am glad," he thought, "that I did not take Womegew. He would say this storm was bad medicine and would never go any farther."

CHAPTER XXI

A DIVE FOR LIFE

Two days the lad had nothing to do but smoke his fish and roam about on Five-Mile Point, while a strong northwester rolled in endless lines of white-crested waves upon the long point and upon the sand dunes, which he could see stretching far away to the north. But the sun was shining and, although the lad was impatient to be off, fear and superstition had left him and he felt the courage to go ahead on his journey.

After his fish was smoked and dried he rambled along the point and gathered wild plums and the last of an abundant crop of choke-cherries and sand-cherries. Some of this wild fruit he ate as he picked it, and the rest he dried in the sun to take along on his journey north. Although he had to eat it all without sugar, it added, after being boiled, a very acceptable variety to his all-meat or all-fish diet.

“That little sugar,” he promised to himself,

“I’m going to give to Ellen, for no sugar-trees grow in the Far North where she lives.”

On the third day the wind had died down and the lake lay quiet under a blue summer sky and the lad was soon paddling northward on the inland passage between the sand dunes and the Ontario shore. He was strongly tempted to stop and explore these glistening sand hills, crowned with low trees and bushes, but he felt that he should be going whenever the weather was fair. He was also strongly tempted again to visit his friends at the Big Grassy River, but this temptation he also resisted.

“It wouldn’t do,” he said to himself. “Who knows how often I shall be storm-bound or fog-bound before I reach Norway House, and how often I shall have to stop to hunt or fish? Some of my friends might wish to go along and the larger the party the more difficult it will be to find enough food. So we would have to travel slowly and might not reach Norway House before the lakes freeze up. No, I must push on by myself, although it is going to be a lonesome and dangerous journey.”

So he pushed on with stout self-reliance and strong arms, for he was at that happy age when

a well-fed youth hardly knows the meaning of fatigue.

Long lines of white gulls and black cormorants were resting on the low sand-spit that reaches out northward from the sand dunes, and some of the birds arose and followed the canoe, screaming and calling high overhead as if they resented the intrusion of a human being into their wilderness of water and islands.

When evening came the young traveler had passed the mouth of the Big Grassy and made his camp under the scrubby pines on one of the 10,000 islands which dot the northern and north-eastern part of Lakes of the Woods. He had made, with a gentle breeze behind him, fifty miles in one day, and he reckoned that within two days he would be going down the Winnipeg River to the great lake of Muddy Water, as the Chippewa called Lake Winnipeg.

However, this fond, impatient hope of the youth was not realized. On the second morning a fog so dense covered lake and islands that traveling was impossible. Had his camp not been on an island he would have been afraid to leave camp at all for fear of getting lost in the gray, dripping forest. As it was, he made a trip

around the shore, keeping in the open as much as possible to avoid the dripping boughs and brush, and with bow and arrow he killed a few grouse and rabbits to add to his provisions, for his stock of smoked sturgeon was already growing visibly smaller.

When he returned to camp the fog had grown so dense that he knew nothing better to do than to build a fire of driftwood and sit down, waiting for the fog to lift. Fortunately for the lad, he had acquired some of the Indians' stolid patience, which enables the red man to sit and wait all day without grumbling and without fretting, and, as white hunters claim, without even winking an eye. Thus John sat and gazed at the fire, and when it had burnt low he put on more driftwood, and when he had dried and warmed himself on one side he turned the other side to the blaze, for the fog was of the raw, bone-chilling kind and the lone hunter imagined that he could smell the approach of winter in it.

Thus he sat a long time, perhaps the most lonely youth in the world. However, he gave no thought to his loneliness, for in all matters pertaining to wind and weather he had become as stoical as the Indians who, during many generations, had

learned not to fret about the acts of that high power which makes wind and weather.

Suddenly a noise of something rummaging at the canoe and a well-known snorting and whining made him spring up like a bolt and, hatchet in hand, he rushed to his upturned canoe, under which he had placed his stock of dried fish. The sight he met made him yell with anger; for there stood a big she-bear with two cubs greedily devouring the food which he had secured with so much trouble and which he sorely needed for his journey. With his hatchet he rushed at the three bears, for his gun was wrapped up in a blanket several rods away. But the old bear would not be so easily driven off, because in her opinion this yelling, fighting man was going to hurt her cubs, and she rushed at him so furiously that the lad barely dodged a blow from her big paw, which would have torn the skin off his face if it had struck him. Instinctively he knew that he couldn't fight a mad she-bear with a hatchet without getting terribly clawed and perhaps killed, so he rushed for the water, feeling every second that the snorting bear close behind him would reach out a terrible paw and pin him face down to the rocks. Without looking back he threw himself

into the narrow channel, swam across with a few long strokes and climbed up a scrubby pine on the little islet just across from his camp.

Only when he stood on a safe bough did he again look and listen for the bear which he felt sure he had heard plunge into the water after him.

“Come up here, you miserable, thieving brute!” he yelled, “I’ll split your dirty black nose for you! Come up here!”

Then he listened. There was no bear under the tree nor in the water, but he could hear the cubs whining and quarreling over the sturgeon. He slid to the ground and recrossed the channel nearly as quick as he had come when he imagined the bear coming after him.

“Get out of there, you dirty thieves!” he yelled in Chippewa as he sprang on land and ran for his gun. In a few seconds he was at the canoe ready to fire, but the bears had taken him at his word and had made off. He heard the cracking of some twigs and ran in that direction, but the fog was so dense that pursuit was impossible and within a few minutes he heard nothing but the hammering of a lone woodpecker and the scolding of a red squirrel; the bears were gone.

He hurried back to examine his canoe. Thank

God, the brutes had not injured it. Next he looked at his provisions. The smoked sturgeon was gone, all except a few stray bits, which were scattered about on the rocks.

“Hang the thieves!” he muttered. “There were thirty pounds of the finest smoked sturgeon and those gluttons devoured it all for one meal! I hope it’ll make them dog-sick, but it won’t. They could have gulped down a hundred pounds without getting sick. I’ll shoot every dirty black bear I can put my eyes on!”

After a while, when his anger at the loss of his provisions had subsided, he sat down at the fire and laughed.

“How did I get my hatchet across the channel the first time?” he wondered. “I didn’t know I had it till I yelled at the bears from the tree. I guess this bear story I’ll keep to myself. It would soon travel from the Red River to Lake Huron if I let it out and would be the ruin of my reputation as a hunter. Mighty lucky I didn’t take Womegew on this trip. Surely this fog would look like bad medicine to him, and he never would have kept quiet about this bear hunt.”

The fog did not lift till late in the afternoon and the lad remained another night at Bear camp,

but of the bears, although he hunted for them, he found no trace. Evidently they had been attracted by the smell from his camp and had now swam back the way they had come to another island or to the mainland.

For two days after this event, the youth paddled along on the most beautiful canoe route in the world. Wooded islands and beautifully tinted and striped rocks and reefs he passed without number. He steered by the sun, and by the rocky islands which were all planed smooth by glaciers on the north side and left rough on the south side; for compass he had none.

He lived on grouse which he secured without much trouble on any of the larger islands and when he reached the Winnipeg River, he easily speared a big sturgeon at one of the many rapids of this stream, and without further mishap, but with much hard work of carrying his canoe and baggage over the portages along this rapid river he reached the big lake of Muddy Water.

He had been many times on the southern end of this lake, but had never seen the whole of it, as it stretches two hundred miles northwestward from the mouth of the Red River.

Few lads would care to make a solitary trip of

two hundred miles over a wild, stormy lake, and few would have the courage; for a big unknown lake has a truly forbidding aspect to a solitary canoeist. But John knew the wilderness, he knew how to handle his bark craft, and how to wrest his food from the wilderness. Of course a canoe can travel on Lake Winnipeg only near shore and in good weather, and John started north along the west shore. He knew that this shore would consist of endless spruce and tamarack swamps with few good camping places, but it was by far the safer shore, for he also knew that the wind and most of the storms in that region came from the west.

He encountered much stormy and foggy weather when for days at a time he could do nothing but sit at the campfire and gaze at the fire or out over the turbulent brown water. About food he did not have to worry. The bays were full of ducks and geese and it was only a question of securing his game with the smallest amount of ammunition. He saw several bears, but did not keep his promise to shoot them at sight. "After all," he thought, "that she-bear did only what any human mother would do. She risked her life for her little ones."

Nor was the young hunter in any particular hurry to end his journey. He wanted to reach Norway House before the country froze up, and it was about the middle of October when, to the barking of a mob of savage dogs, he pulled his canoe ashore at the landing of this lonely Hudson Bay post.

CHAPTER XXII

AT THE END OF HIS WITS

THE Hudson Bay factor, McTavic, was not a little surprised to see a lone man pull his canoe upon the Rocks near Norway House. He was still more surprised to see that this lone traveler was a white youth, although sun and wind had tanned his face and hands to the hue of an Indian, and he wore his hair long after the fashion of the red hunters. McTavic was suspicious of this white lad. Who was he? Most likely a spy from the rival Northwest Company that caused so much trouble to the Hudson Bay Company in the Red River country.

McTavic invited the stranger into his house, but he was on his guard and made up his mind to find out what had brought him into this region and not to give him any information or render him any assistance that might cause trouble for himself or his company. John, on his part, although glad of the company of a human being, after his long, lonely journey, instinctively felt that this man was

not friendly to him and that he had to be on his guard.

The suspicion of McTavic was increased by the speech and behavior of the stranger. This strange white lad spoke a broken English, a little French, a little Cree, and asked if McTavic spoke Chippewa, of which the trader and his men had but a trader's vocabulary.

Half a mile from Norway House, under some stunted jack-pines, John made his camp. He still had enough food for a few weeks, and fish were plentiful in Little Playgreen Lake, and in both channels of the Nelson River on either side of Norway House island.

He hoped that some Cree Indians might come to trade at Norway House and that from them he might secure information about his sister. At this camp John's stolid patience was tested to its limit. Every day if the weather was not too rough he cruised about on Little Playgreen Lake or on the river, hoping to fall in with some Cree Indian who, he felt sure, would be glad to receive news and give news. When he was not waiting and watching for Indians, he visited McTavic and his men, hoping to pick up some bit of information that might help him in his errand. But Mc-

Tavic and his men, although willing enough to talk about all matters of indifference to John, never let out a word about camping or hunting grounds of the Cree nor of any white woman living in any of the Cree camps. From his own observations and from information he gathered from the men, John learned that the Indians had all left for their widely scattered hunting and trapping grounds and few were expected at the post before spring.

This information caused John to do some very hard thinking. Almost at the beginning of the search for Ellen, he was completely baffled. If he stayed in this camp over winter, he might have to beg McTavic for food after lakes and rivers were frozen over. He understood now, why the Chippewa called the country of the Cree Poor Lands; for since he had arrived, he had seen no game except a few red squirrels and rabbits and not enough of these to keep a man supplied with meat. Moreover the very trees told him that this was not the rich game country of the Chippewa. Along the ridges and slopes near the rivers and streams there grew patches of good timber, but over the country generally, regions of great muskegs, covered with a scrubby growth of spruce

and tamarack, alternated with great stretches of rocky or sandy ridges covered with a scrubby growth of jack-pine, poplar and birch. The magnificent maples and oaks and the tall white and red pines of the Chippewa country were entirely absent here.

Of course, the lad did not expect much game near a trading-post, but the whole country looked uninviting; it offered but little food in summer and poor shelter in winter. He understood now why the Cree people traveled about so much in small groups and roamed over such an immense territory. The country was too poor to support large camps such as were found in the Chippewa and the Sioux country.

The lad's situation became daily more desperate. Winter was upon him. Snow flurries came driving down from the North, the nights grew bitter cold and lakes and rivers began to freeze over, and every day he grew more impatient to escape from his open prison.

But where should he go and what should he do! If he could only see his Indian mother for just half an hour! She was a wise woman and always knew the right way out of a difficulty. He knew she was thinking of him; but she was three hun-

dred miles away, and the lad felt more lonesome and miserable and helpless than he did as a small boy when his red captors dragged him and his sister through the forests of far away Ohio.

What should he do? He might just strike out and try to find game and the Crees. If this were the Chippewa country he would know where to find both game and Indians. But this country was utterly unknown to him as a game country. All he did know was that the great river below his camp ran north into Hudson Bay, and that about seventy miles southwest of his camp the great Saskatchewan fell into Lake Winnipeg from the west. Of this river he had heard Netnowa and Peshaubo speak, and he had easily recognized it as he passed the mouth on his trip to Norway House.

If he struck out by himself into this unknown country he was not likely to find any Cree camp, he ran good chances either of starving to death or being compelled to return to Norway House and beg McTavic for food. There was just one other possibility and he boldly grasped it. He asked McTavic to employ him as a hunter and trapper for the company.

McTavic pretended to be surprised at this offer.

“Did you ever work for the Northwesters?” he asked point blank.

“No.”

“Where did you live?”

“With the Chippewa.”

“Where are your parents?”

“The Indians told me they killed them soon after they stole me.”

McTavic seemed satisfied with John's account of himself; but in his own mind he thought: “The lad has gotten himself into some trouble amongst the Chippewa and in order to save his scalp has fled into the Cree country. He looks to be a good lad, but he'll make trouble for me if I don't look out.”

However, John was given a credit of fifty dollars which he took out mostly in traps, blankets, and clothing; and now he was a trapper of the great Hudson Bay Company.

McTavic was a new man in the Cree country and said he did not know much about the haunts of game and fur-bearing animals. One of the men said neither game nor Indians were powerfully thick anywhere. A man just had to scout along, study out the lay of the land, and watch for signs of fur. He thought toward the northwest fifty

or one hundred miles the country ought to be as good as anywhere. So John started out westward across Little Playgreen Lake and Ross Island and the west channel of the Nelson River into the unknown and uninhabited wilderness. He carried a light pack of seventy-five pounds, consisting principally of his blankets, traps, ammunition and the little hominy and dried meat which he had brought from the Rapid River. His small treasure of tea and sugar and a few other things, he cached among the branches of a jack-pine after he had carefully tied it up in a roll of birch bark. Such a cache is entirely safe in the Indian country to this day, as safe as a white man's papers and money in a steel vault.

A pack of seventy-five pounds would be an impossible burden for a white man not used to carrying things on his back. Fifty pounds is more than enough for a white tenderfoot, but John, trained in the ways of the Indians, thought it a light burden and felt that he could make long marches with it.

CHAPTER XXIII

IN THE GREAT SOLITUDE

AND long marches he did make. On the first day, having made an early start, he camped twenty-five miles from Norway House. All day long he passed through a great silent wilderness. It had snowed during the night, and now, as far as the eye could reach, the snow lay like cotton in soft tufts and masses of pure white on the dark green boughs of the jack-pine and was spread out like crooked white lines on the bare branches of poplars and tamaracks, for the air was still and the snow lay just as it had been sifted down during the night. The sun spread a dazzling light over the endless solitude, and the fluffy snow glistened with a radiance which was almost blinding.

In the pure air the lad tramped along with a buoyant spirit, for more favorable conditions for traveling one could hardly imagine. The country was fairly open, the swamps and small lakes were frozen, so, steering a straight northwesterly course, he kept up a steady gait over ridges of

open scrub pine, and across vast muskegs of scattered black spruce and tamaracks.

So happy was the lad to be doing something, and so joyful at having a definite plan of action before him, that he sang the old Chippewa hunting songs which Peshaubo and Netnowa had taught him. He felt now that sooner or later he should fall in with some Crees and should learn about Ellen, for he had no doubt that the Indians he visited on the Big Grassy River had told him the truth.

He had not said a word about his real errand to McTavic because he felt that McTavic would have misled him, or that he might betray his plans, for the lad knew how carefully the traders avoided getting entangled in any of the quarrels of the Indians.

That he should meet difficulties in bringing his sister away had become his firm conviction. Perhaps she might not want to come. He remembered a story his father used to tell of a white girl captured long ago by the Indians at Deerfield in Massachusetts. This girl grew up amongst the Indians and when, at last, her father and friends did find her, she had married an Indian and would not leave the tribe. Her husband also strongly

objected to her leaving and she never returned to the white settlements.

In fact, John himself had for several years hardly thought of living again among white people. For years he believed that his parents were dead and that his brothers and sisters, except Ellen, had also been killed by the Indians, and he did not know where other relatives of the family were living. Since he had been adopted by Netnowa he had been treated well and had grown to like the free life of an Indian hunter. Only during the last year or two, since he had passed boyhood, had he longed to go back to the whites. The endless wandering back and forth in search of game and fur had lost its charm. It seemed to lead to nothing. Ever and ever a period of plenty was followed by a period of starvation. Of home life, such as he remembered from his early boyhood, there could be none, although the life of the Indians was by no means a sad one. On the contrary, they were a cheerful, happy-go-lucky people who quickly forgot the hardships and the starvation of yesterday to enjoy the plenty of to-day.

But the aimlessness and hopelessness of it all had begun to weigh upon him. No Indian had a

permanent home. Living on the wild beasts of the forest, they had to wander about like wild beasts, and although there was much big game and all kinds of fish in the Chippewa country, after almost every winter, news passed from camp to camp that another old hunter had starved to death.

And in addition to all this, there were those horrible scenes of drunkenness and debauchery. Many an Indian would hunt and trap hard all winter and in the spring would waste everything he had on whisky, and he and his friends would be drunk for several days. Quarrels and murders, sickness and many accidental deaths were the result of these drunken orgies. Womegew, John's Indian brother, was disfigured for life by having had his nose bitten off in a drunken brawl.

But in those days no way had been found to exclude liquor from the Indian country, and the unspeakable horror continued without check, until about 1825, when the Hudson Bay Company, having absorbed the Northwest Company of Montreal, obtained a monopoly of the fur trade in Canada. In the United States the abomination of selling whisky to the Indians continued much longer.

For these reasons John had firmly made up his mind to find his sister, if she was still alive, and if possible to bring her away to his Chippewa mother, Netnowa. Then with his mother and sister he would leave the Indians and live with the whites.

Thus his past boyhood and big plans for the future passed through his mind as he strode in youthful strength over ridges and frozen swamps. His cheeks were aglow, his eyes sparkled with hope and his brow was perspiring in the exhilarating tramp across the wintry solitude.

He felt sure now that his mother and father were still alive, and he must find Ellen and together they must go back to their old mother in Kentucky.

Only one thing tended to depress his high spirits. He saw no sign of game or fur, no track of moose or caribou along the poplar slopes, no tracks of mink or fisher along the sluggish brown streams that ran from one muskeg to another. A few chickadees called and whistled in the willows, alders, and killikinnick along the streams, a lone white-headed jay called from a spruce thicket and eyed the equally lone hunter with bold curiosity,

and the only rabbit he saw he killed for his supper.

The great solitude was almost lifeless. In the Chippewa country John would have abandoned at once a region with so little sign of game in it; but this was the Hungry Woods of the Cree, and McTavie's man probably was right when he said that neither game nor Indians were thick here.

Late in the afternoon John made a comfortable camp behind a spruce thicket, and after an abundant meal of rabbit stew and a long drink of hot broth, a sound sleep made him forget the hopeless sordidness of Indian life and the difficulties and dangers ahead.

CHAPTER XXIV

A HUDSON BAY TRAPPER

THUS the lad trudged on for several days through a country which showed but little variation in its general character from that which he had crossed over the first day; except that it was more monotonous and showed still fewer signs of life.

On the fourth day he reached a high limestone ridge running east and west, and following this ridge for two days he found a well sheltered camping place at the south end of a lake, which, dotted with numerous islands, stretched away toward the north.

Although he found even at this place no sign of big game, the spot looked good for a permanent camp, and the lad was tired out by this time and glad to rest.

A clear spring brook ran out of the range of hills, the place was well sheltered by a thick stand of spruce which would cut off the piercing north winds, and on the shore of the lake lay large quan-

tities of well-seasoned driftwood which would save him much of the labor of cutting firewood. Signs of small game and fur were also more abundant than he had yet found on this trip. There were tracks of mink, weasel, fisher, and marten and a large track which he did not know. Rabbits were fairly common and he had already bagged several spruce-hens or fool-hens to vary his larder.

He liked the place for one more desirable point. The high ridge formed a landmark by which he could easily return to camp from any direction. Having no compass, and being in an absolutely strange country, he feared getting lost in bad weather. The ridge was visible for many miles from the north, and wherever he might go to trap, he could always strike out for this ridge and follow it till he came to his camp. North of the ridge several lakes and streams promised to be fair trapping grounds, and the ridge extended east and west as far as he could see.

"If I get lost where I have a long straight mountain for a landmark I deserve to get lost," he thought.

The first important thing he had to do, after he had selected a camping-place, was to build himself some kind of shelter. The old-style Chippewa

houses and tepees are covered with the bark of birch, spruce, or cedar, but this material can only be secured during spring and early summer, when the bark peels. During winter the bark does not peel, and for that reason the young hunter could not build a bark house. For a white man, an Indian tepee or bark house would not be really comfortable in winter. While the fire is going in the center it is fairly warm, but at night, if the fire goes out, the cold soon comes in through the smoke-hole in the roof.

In this difficulty John thought of the log cabin in which Peshaubo and his two men lived on the Assiniboin, and as he expected to remain in this camp until spring, he decided to build as good a log cabin as the conditions permitted. He could not do the work leisurely, because winter had already set in, and there was no telling how soon blinding snowstorms and very cold weather would make the work of building a cabin very difficult.

The days in that far Northern country were already very short and it seemed to John that he could notice how rapidly they were growing shorter. Although it was only the middle of November the sun did not rise before eight o'clock, and on cloudy days it was dark again at four.

So the lone hunter set to work at once. It was an easy matter to find the logs for his small cabin, for he had made his camp on the edge of a spruce thicket, where he could find plenty of straight trunks about half a foot thick, which answered his purpose admirably. Of these he built the walls, while the roof was made of smaller poles and thatched with balsam boughs and dead rushes. Over the thatch he tied firmly a number of poles so that the wind could not blow it off.

The most difficult parts to build were the fireplace and the chimney, for these he had to build of mud and stones. If the lake had not been frozen over it would have been easy to secure plenty of stones and mud for mortar, but now the only place where he could secure these necessary building materials was the bed of a small creek which was still open. With the wooden shovel which he had cut out of a poplar tree he dug up mud and stones.

"It is beastly cold and dirty work," he thought, as he carried load after load to his cabin, "but it's got to be done!" The mud had to be used immediately, for it began to freeze hard as soon as it was dug. For two days he worked as diligently as a beaver does when he prepares his dam

and lodge for winter. As soon as the chimney was finished he built a small fire to bake and harden the clay. Some of the stones broke with a sharp crack and fell out when they became heated, but the whole structure soon hardened and worked well. When the boy saw that his fireplace worked all right he spent a day in calking the cracks and joints between the logs with mud, which froze hard as soon as it was put on and made the cabin quite tight against the wind and the fine drifting snow-crystals.

The last thing to construct was the door. It was very small and was made by tying a piece of canvas to some slender poles, for he had no nails. But this did not trouble him, for during his life with the Indians he had learned to make all sorts of things without nails. When he had tied the door to the wall by two buck-thong hinges, he gave a yell: "Now," he said, "I won't freeze; let Minnisig, the Northwind, blow all he wants to." And he had a good reason for shouting because during five days from morning till night, he had carried poles and mud like a beaver.

At last his real work began. He set out his line of traps over a trail about ten miles long. Some were set along small streams where his keen

eyes observed the small obscure tracks of mink on patches of unfrozen mud or where he found their very plain trails on the snow. Other traps he set in the houses of muskrats or near open pools, where little bits of aquatic roots told him that a muskrat was in the habit of coming up to feed. A few traps he set for the rarer and much more valuable fisher and marten, as well as for fox and lynx, although of the big catlike tracks of the lynx he had as yet found no sign.

All traps which needed bait he baited with bits of rabbit meat or with the heads and necks of spruce-hens.

His traps were set about half a mile apart. One line of traps extended about five miles in a northeasterly direction and another line reached about the same distance in a northwesterly direction.

His life was by no means an easy one. He visited all his traps every other day which meant that every day he had to walk at least ten miles, no matter how cold it was or how sharp the north wind rattled through the spruces or crackled in the frozen twigs of birches and poplars.

Occasionally he took a day off to trap beavers, but these he hunted in Indian fashion, because he

had no traps available for them. Having located the big house in their pond, he pounded the frozen roof of it with his ax until he felt the frightened animals had left their warm castles and had taken refuge in their burrows along the edges of the pond. These burrows he had carefully located before he began pounding on the roof of their houses; but as he had no dog, he very often could not tell in which of their many burrows the flat-tailed pond-dwellers had taken refuge and many a time he worked in vain, cutting the ice at the entrance of a burrow. When he did locate a beaver in a burrow, he pulled him out by hand, but it was very cold and wet work. It had, however, one great advantage. A captured beaver meant not only a valuable skin but also a nice lot of excellent fat meat; for beavers are good eating and are nearly always fat in winter, although their only food is the bark and twigs of poplar and birch and willow, of which they pickle great quantities in the water, just before the ponds freeze over.

For wolves and bears he did not trap; for the bears are asleep in their winter quarters during the cold weather, and he had no traps large enough to hold a wolf. Moreover, wolves, of all

wild animals, are most difficult to trap, and in those days their pelts were not very valuable, and of course, not even the Hudson Bay Company paid a bounty at that time on wolves that roamed in the vast solitudes north of Lake Winnipeg and the Saskatchewan. Very often, indeed, he heard their dismal howling at night while he was cooking his supper over a little fire in his cabin. A white man, or a lad not accustomed to a life in the great, wild North country would have found little sleep on such a night, but John paid no more attention to their weird hoo-hoo-ooo than he did to the wild mice scurrying along the logs of his cabin. His meat they could not steal because he hung it up in a tree or kept it in his cabin, and his traps they did not molest because they were too suspicious of danger. Once, indeed, a big, young wolf, inquisitive and curious like a young boy, poked his long snout into John's door. That was too much for the young trapper. He gave a ringing Chippewa yell, grabbed a club and rushed out after the bold intruder, but the wolf, like a tawny-gray streak, was just vanishing into a jack-pine thicket; and he never came back. Several times while he was following his lines John saw a wolf slink away into a spruce thicket,

and on one occasion he came within easy gunshot of a big monster sitting on his haunches and calmly watching the lone trapper from a hill, but the lad did not even fire at him, because lead and powder were too precious in the den on Reed Lake.

“If I wasn’t here all alone I’d fix you, old howler,” John shouted to the big brute, “but I may need that bullet too badly for a moose or a caribou, to waste it on the rank carcass of old Maheengun.”

While quite a number of wolves passed John’s cabin or crossed his trails, none remained in the region, and John took it as a bad sign.

“It means,” he reasoned, “that there is no big game in this region. All the moose and caribou signs are very old, six months or even older, and I wonder why the game has left? I should have found both moose and caribou, the country looks good for them.”

For about a month, however, the lad did reasonably well with his traps; so that he felt sure he would not only be able to pay off his debt to the Hudson Bay Company, but would have a nice balance left over.

“A nice balance at Norway House would come

in handy," he thought, "for I may have to buy the freedom of Ellen—if I ever find her."

To the real object of his long, lonesome journey he seemed to be no nearer than he was, when he left Netnowa's camp on Rapid River, for of the Cree Indians he had neither seen track, nor sign nor smoke. It seemed as if he were the only human being between the great Saskatchewan far to the south and the wild Churchill River on the edge of the barren tundras to the north.

At the end of a month something happened which tested the lad's skill as a hunter and trapper as it had never been tested before.

On his Northwest trail he found the large tracks of a strange animal and very soon this strange animal began to interfere with his traps. It stole his bait, devoured the animals he had caught and even carried off some of his traps. So serious became the damage that it became a question whether the young white trapper or the wild beast should leave the region.

John had thus far never seen this enemy of his and he did not know its track, but from stories told at Chippewa campfires he figured out that it must be a wolverine, the carcajou of the French, or devil of the Indians.

The climax came one night when the wolverine tore John's cache of hominy and venison out of the bushy jack-pine, devoured the meat, and befouled the hominy so it was absolutely useless.

When the hunter crawled out of his den in the morning and saw the ruin of his much prized emergency cache, he swore vengeance on the four-footed robber.

"I'll get him!" he vowed, "if it takes me all winter."

CHAPTER XXV

HUNTING THE FOUR-FOOTED DEVIL

WHILE he was cooking and eating his breakfast he made a plan for catching the hated beast.

“I either have to get him,” he said, “or I have to pull up and leave the country. I haven’t brought home a single fur all the week.”

That day he walked over both trails and took up all his traps. The smaller ones he hung up in bunches in trees where he could easily find them again, but a half dozen of the larger ones he took along. In the evening he came home to his camp tired and dispirited. Two fine minks had been in the traps, but the carcajou had stolen both. Usually the lad carried only a stout stick when he made the rounds to his traps; to-day he had carried his gun the whole long weary twenty miles, but the well-known story had repeated itself—his game was stolen, he found the tracks of the thief, but as to the depredator himself, he had vanished into some safe thicket.

All traps having been taken up, the lad set to work to catch the destroyer of his route. The

old deadfall trap which John knew how to build long before he met any Cree or Chippewa seemed to him worth trying in dead earnest. In his early boyhood home in Kentucky he did indeed not build it to catch wolves and bears and four-footed devils, but frisky house-mice and wood-mice that invaded his father's log house in winter and ate big holes into the hams and bacon and venison in the smoke-house. For this small game John used to build the old figure-4 traps as soon as he was old enough to handle a jackknife. In fact he whittled his first figure-4 sticks before he had learned to use a knife. He remembered very well how he slyly secured his father's hunting knife to construct his first deadfall for mice. All went well till he tried to put a smooth bevel on the short slanting stick. Then there was a slip, the little trapper dropped knife and sticks, and with lusty shouts and screams ran for the rescuer of all small boyhood.

"Mother, Mother," he screamed at the top of his voice. "I cut my thumb off, I cut my thumb off! Don't tell Father! I—I'll get a licking, I took his big knife!" and he jumped about with fright and pain, holding the injured hand straight out.

His mother came quickly at the frantic appeals, and was much relieved to find that the little fellow's thumb was still on; however, it did need some careful bandaging, and the scar, which remained for life, often reminded its bearer of the big knife, his first trap and his long-lost white mother.

In the evening at supper, when John's father inquired about the reason for the bandaged thumb, the boy's mother rescued the blushing and choking little fellow from an embarrassing situation by answering in his place that John cut his thumb while whittling a stick.

Thereupon his father remarked that John shouldn't try to whittle with the table knives; when he was big enough he would bring him a jackknife from Louisville.

At this remark John again blushed violently, but made no reply, and to his great relief the subject was dropped and his father began to talk about husking corn, and how fat the deer were that fall.

These pictures of a happy boyhood in far-away Kentucky floated through the mind of the lone hunter as he built his deadfalls on Reed Lake and baited them with rabbit meat. So carefully did

he build each trap, and so delicately did he adjust the figure-4 that he felt quite sure the carcajou would soon be crushed to death under one of the drop logs.

But things turned out differently. The wily beast destroyed every trap by pulling down the top log before he entered the house for the bait, and John acknowledged that he could not catch the creature in a deadfall.

He was, however, not disposed to give up. So he tried another plan. He took half a dozen of his large iron traps and, in a likely place, where the uncanny beast seemed to pass every night, he set them in a circle, one trap pretty close to the other. In the middle of the circle he threw a piece of rabbit, and then he covered all the traps with loose snow, brushed it smooth with a spruce bough, and dragged some branches over his own tracks to allay the suspicion of the most wary creature he had ever tried to capture.

The next two days John hunted rabbits and spruce-hens south of the big limestone escarpment, and did not go near his traps.

“I’ll give the four-footed devil a fair chance to get caught,” he said to himself. The third day he went to look at his traps.

The carcajou had been there. In fact, to judge from the confusion of tracks everywhere around the traps, a small drove of carcajous had been there. Three of the traps the animals had pulled up by the chains and dragged away, the other three traps were still set, but the rabbit meat was gone, and John began to think that perhaps the Indians were right after all. It certainly looked as if the creature were actually possessed by the devil.

"I'll try once more," the boy said, as he sat down on one of his destroyed deadfalls and thought out a new plan.

He tied a skinned rabbit to a bunch of brush and dragged the whole over a trail two miles long, taking care that the rabbit and its entrails followed behind the brush and that the brush almost entirely obliterated his own tracks. He felt sure that the sly beast would follow this trail as soon as he struck it. In three places on the trail he set a trap. He took care not to touch the traps with bare hands, he covered them with loose snow and carefully dragged the rabbit over them but did not bait them.

Some fine loose snow fell during the next night and John was in high spirits.

“Now,” he thought, “the trail looks entirely natural and I ought to get him.”

So he took his gun to visit his traps, taking care, however, not to walk on the trail where he had dragged the rabbit.

On the second day he found the big tracks of the carcajou. One of the traps was gone, but there was a little blood on the snow and John gave the Chippewa warwhoop and shouted:

“I’ve got him!” and started to follow the animal’s trail which was very plain on the fresh snow, expecting to find the creature tangled up in the brush not many rods away.

He had gone only a few rods when his exultation again changed to doubt.

Incredible as it seemed, the beast had pulled the trap loose from the clog, to which it had been attached, and had gone on with the iron trap on his left fore-foot.

Very soon another thing began to puzzle the lad.

How could the beast travel so far and how did he manage that in many places no trace was left of the trap dragging in the snow?

After following the trail for about four miles, John suddenly caught sight of the animal emerg-

ing from behind a fallen jack-pine. For a moment John could not believe his eyes. The animal was carrying the trap in his mouth and was making off at a rapid gait on three legs; and when the hunter had sufficiently recovered from his surprise to think of raising his gun, trap and animal had disappeared among some small spruces in a hollow.

Although wondering at this remarkable sagacity in an animal, John followed the trail quickly. But in the hollow the carcajou had decidedly the better of it; for the snow had blown in from the surrounding hills and had become just enough crusted to carry the fleeing carcajou, but the hunter plunged deep into it at every step.

At the end of half an hour the trail led to a barren hillside, and here, caught behind a small log, lay the trap with two of the carcajou's toes in it.

When John saw this he increased his speed. As hardy an animal as this creature would pay little attention to such slight wounds, but being released of a six-pound trap would only travel so much faster and in an hour the sun would go down.

The wind was in favor of the hunter and be-

fore very long he saw the animal sitting near a rock on a sunny hillside, apparently licking his wounds. John made use of whatever cover there was to crawl up within range. At last he thought he was close enough and dropped on his knees to shoot. A stick cracked, and before the lad could fire, something happened which caused his Indian superstition to get the better of him.

There in plain sight, scarcely fifty yards away, the creature sat up on his haunches and with his right forepaw he was shielding his eyes against the bright light to get a better look at the hunter who was so persistently following him.

This was too much for John.

"Great Manitou!" he cried, "he's a devil, or a bewitched Indian! I can't kill him!" and with that he turned around and made for camp as fast as he could go.

He felt his hair rising under his cap and the gooseflesh creeping up on his back. From time to time he looked behind with startled eyes to see if the uncanny beast was following him.

"Thank Heavens!" he murmured, "he's not coming after me."

The carcajou and the panther were amongst the few wild animals John had not become ac-



"HE'S A DEVIL, OR A BEWITCHED INDIAN! I CAN'T KILL HIM!"—Page 244.

quainted with during his stay among the Indians; for both were very rare in the country where he had trapped and hunted; but of the carcajou he had heard some wonderful tales, and he knew that many old Indians claimed that the creature had a bad spirit in him.

That night John barricaded his door with logs, for he was afraid that he might wake up with the bush-tailed devil-beast standing over him.

Just before daylight he awoke and sprang up with a yell, for he had been dreaming that the devil beast had come into the cabin and was going to hit him on the head with a big iron trap.

When daylight came John cached his fur in his den and closed the opening with the biggest logs he could find. Then he tied up his blankets and a few traps and left the country. With other Indian superstitions he had also absorbed a belief in dreams, although he felt half ashamed of it.

"I couldn't sleep in that den another night," he said. "I would surely dream again of that devil-beast," and with that he climbed the steep limestone escarpment and struck out straight south for the Saskatchewan country.

CHAPTER XXVI

FINDING THE CREE CAMP

OVER low hills and wide muskegs, through thickets of poplar and open jack pine barrens, the lad traveled in high spirits. He was glad to get away from the haunted trails of Reed Lake. Many a time he had laughed at the Indians for being superstitious about haunted lakes and rivers and woods, but his long solitary life and his experience with the wolverine had so worked upon his mind that at this time he would not have ventured to camp in any place the Indians believed to be haunted by evil spirits.

So anxious was he to get away from the supposed evil beast that he marched briskly all day until the low position of the sun told him it was time to make camp.

Knowing that the clear night would grow bitter cold, he scraped away the snow from his sleeping place and built a good fire over it. When the flames had died down, he made a rough lean-to as shelter against the cold air that came flowing from the northwest. For supper he

broiled the last rabbit meat he had brought with him, and also made a small kettleful of white man's tea.

He also cut up a green birch with which to keep the fire going through the night, for the truth is his imagination was still so wrought up that he was afraid to sleep without a fire.

However, after his long tramp he slept so soundly on the warm, dry ground that he never even awoke to replenish the fire, and when he wanted to cook his last meal and make a little tea for breakfast he had to pick some fine dry grass to blow the few glowing coals into flame again.

After his warm meal he started with a buoyant stride, for he had planned it all out how to find an encampment of Crees and he felt hungry and starved for human companionship.

"Just any kind of people!" he said to himself. "I would be glad to run into a camp of Sioux. But it will be such fun to camp with the Crees. They are friends of the Chippewas, and if Ellen lives anywhere in this country of great muskegs and pine barrens, they will surely know where she is!" and he almost broke into a run as if he could already see Ellen's camp.

On his trip down Lake Winnipeg he had noticed a deserted winter camp of Indians near the mouth of the Saskatchewan. He felt sure that some Crees were encamped there now, and it was the thought of this camp which made his eyes shine with the light of hope and made his feet almost fly over the frozen swamps and the snow covered ridges.

He did not know whether it was one hundred or two hundred miles away, and he was, of course, not at all sure that the Crees were now occupying this camp, but the thought of this camp and of Ellen made him forget both his loneliness and the haunting carcajou devil.

A man not accustomed to traveling in the wilderness would soon have been hopelessly lost, but John, although he had probably never heard of geography and explorations, possessed a large stock of intimate first-hand geographical knowledge, much larger than most white boys and men ever acquire. He had traveled on foot and in canoes from the Ohio River to the Nelson River, and although he had only seen the Saskatchewan at its mouth, he felt no uneasiness about recognizing it when he saw it.

He knew it was a large, rapid, and muddy

prairie stream like the Red and Assiniboin, and that its general course ran from west to east. It might divide into several channels, its banks might be wooded or bare, high or marshy; he would recognize it by its size and general direction. Should he strike a tributary he would follow it to the main stream. You can't get lost if you travel downstream; unless you are so green that you can't be trusted to go a mile from home or camp. John also felt sure that he could find the Indian camping-ground again. After he had reached Lake Winnipeg he would travel northward on the ice along the coast till he came in sight of the camp.

Two other things, however, began to trouble him. After he had traveled a few hours on the second day, he came into a vast burnt-over country which contained absolutely no game. All day he traveled through burnt spruce, tamarack and jack-pine, and when evening came he had not even seen a rabbit or a spruce-hen. However, fasting for one or two days was nothing new to him, so he drank some hot tea, made his camp and rolled up in his blankets before the fire.

On the third day he reached the frozen Saskatchewan and started down stream on the ice.

He sighted a wolf and tried to get a shot at it.

"Old wolf-steak is rank," he said, "but I think I could relish a piece of it."

However, the beast was too wary and kept well out of reach, and once more the lad rolled up in his blankets with only hot tea for supper.

On the following day he began to feel faint from lack of food, for the weather was cold and he felt his strength rapidly going and began to feel alarmed for his safety.

"Perhaps I shall never reach the Crees," he said to himself, and again he traveled all day without any food.

On the fifth day he felt so feeble that he was afraid to sit down to rest, fearing that he might fall asleep and freeze to death.

The snow began to look blue and red to his eyes and he stumbled along like one half asleep, hardly able to lift his legs, although the walking on the river was very good.

"I must keep going," he kept thinking, "till I find game or strike the Cree camp. If I stop to camp I'll never move again."

Toward noon he saw some peculiar-looking sticks protrude from the ice and upon going up to examine them found them to be the antlers of

an elk that had been drowned in the river before the ice had been quite thick enough to hold him.

The lad gave a shout when he made this discovery. He cut away the ice with his ax and found the meat of the animal perfectly fresh and in half an hour he had a mess of venison boiling in his kettle. The hot broth quickly revived both his spirits and his body and he ate as much of the savory meat as he thought was safe without making himself sick.

The next morning he cut enough elk steak out of the ice to last him a week, and two days later he saw the smoke of the Cree camp at the mouth of the great Saskatchewan River.

CHAPTER XXVII

NEWS ABOUT ELLEN

THE surprise of the Crees was great when a lone white hunter entered their camp, for they had not heard that any white trapper had come into their country.

The Crees of the great muskeg country were naturally a peaceful people. They were enemies, it is true, of the Eskimos, who live on the coast of the Arctic Ocean, but as they were separated from these by the great Barren Grounds, these hostile tribes seldom met. With the Chippewa, their southern neighbors, the Crees had lived at peace for centuries, and when the hunter addressed them both in Chippewa and Cree, they were at once his friends and did all in their power to make him comfortable. He was given the place of honor in their largest tepee, and after he had rested a few days he went out hunting and trapping with the other men of the camp.

His real purpose for coming into the Cree country he kept to himself; for he feared that any untimely divulgence of it might defeat his object.

He often went out trapping with Toohiska, a youth of about his own age. The white hunter himself was called by his Cree friends Mecthechap, meaning Hairy Face, on account of the beard which began to show on his face.

These two young men soon became so well acquainted that one night, as they were encamped at a beaver pond and were talking about the different Indian tribes, John asked his Cree friend how many white people he had seen.

"I have seen only a few," Toohiska replied, "the men at Norway House and at Oxford House, and my brother, Mecthechap."

"Have you ever seen a white woman?" And John thought Toohiska's eyes flashed knowingly when he asked the question with as much feigned indifference as he could muster.

"I have seen only one."

"Where is she?" And John began to feel conscious that Toohiska was reading his thoughts.

"When I saw her last summer she was in the camp of old Chief Untoowenip, on an island near Oxford House. But I do not know where Untoowenip camps in winter."

"Will he camp again at Oxford House after the snow has melted?"

“That is Untoowenip’s camping-place and no other Indian would camp there. But why does my brother Mecthechap wish to know about Naungesee, as we call her? Does he wish to make love to her and play the flute before her tepee as the young Chippewa warriors do when they are in love?”

John anxiously asked himself what he should do. Should he tell Toohiska the object of his long journey, or should he try and secure all possible information and keep his secret as long as possible? He knew that there was much curiosity among the Cree about the object of his journey. To all his stories and accounts their eyes seemed to say: “You are not telling your real reason,” although they did not betray their thoughts by words.

The time had come to speak.

“No, Toohiska,” he said, rising to his knees from a reclining position, “I do not wish to make love to Naungesee.

“I lost a sister a long time ago. I heard that a white woman lived with the Cree north of the Great Lake Winnipeg. I have come to find her and to see if she is my lost sister.”

“If Naungesee is his sister, will Hairy Face

stay with the Cree and not go back to the Chippewa?"

"No, Toohiska, I cannot stay with the Cree nor with my Chippewa mother and brothers. I must go back to my own people, the white people.

"For a long time I thought I would stay with the Indians, but that was when I believed my white parents were dead. Now I know that they are living and are getting old and longing to see me again. So I must go. I must take my sister with me if I find her. Now I have told you everything, and as my brother you will keep my words in your heart."

Toohiska looked disturbed at this burst of confidence of his white companion who had thus far always preserved the outward calm of the Indian.

"Tell me, Toohiska," the white lad resumed, speaking fast and rising to his feet, and throwing another log on the fire so a flash of a thousand sparks rose with a fine crackling, "tell me, how does Naungesee look?"

"Are her eyes blue? And what is the color of her hair? Answer me that!"

"Her eyes are like the clear deep pools among the rocks. Her hair looks like autumn reeds when the sun shines on them. When she sits at

her work her braids would reach the ground, but she fastens them with little pins from the white traders."

"Are her cheeks red? And how does she walk?"

"No, her cheeks are browned by the sun and the wind and the snow and her walk is not like that of the Cree women, who often carry heavy burdens; it is light and quick as that of a fawn; that is why the Cree have called her Naunge-see."

"She's my sister," exclaimed John. "I know her from your words!" and he thrust the butt of his gun violently on the frozen ground.

"Be careful, my brother," the young Cree cautioned his white friend. "You will break a very good gun!" and then the two friends fell into silence, both looking at the glowing and blazing campfire which shed light and a gentle warmth into the open tepee and created a magic scene with dark spruces in the background and fine glittering crystals of snow sailing down as in front of a dark curtain. For the evening was one of those warm and calm evenings which often precede a heavy snowfall, and the boys were enjoying the freedom and pleasure of an open camp-

fire rather than spend the evening in the little cramped tepee.

After a while Toohiska resumed the talk.

“Hairy Face,” he said, “when did your sister come to the Cree?”

“A long time ago. Ellen, that’s her white name, and I are twins. We always played together in Kentucky and the Indians stole us at the same time and took us to a place called Saginaw and there Netnowa bought me, but Ellen was taken North and I never could find any trace of her. I think some Indians and traders I asked must have known about her, but would not tell me. They were afraid it would cause them trouble.”

“I must tell you more,” Toohiska replied, “but I fear they will be bad words for you. You cannot bring away your sister. The Cree will not let you.”

“And why should they not?” asked John, with a suppressed tremble in his voice.

“Because old Chief Untoowenip wants her to remain his daughter always and wants her to marry his son, Obunahse.”

“And what does my white sister say to the old chief’s talk?” John asked anxiously.

“She will be the daughter of old Untoowenip, but not the squaw of Obunahse; because Obunahse is a bad man.”

“Why is he bad?”

“He is a big, violent man, he quarrels with the Indians and with the traders and all have much fear of him, and he loves the mad water which most white traders give to the Indians for their furs.”

“And is that the reason Ellen will not have him?”

“Toohiska does not know. He cannot look into her heart. Some of the Cree women say she is proud and is waiting for a white man to come and take her away, for that is what she has seen in a dream and she believes it will come true.

“Perhaps she is proud. She stands and walks like Mecthechap. She is taller than the Cree women and often when she did not know that I was looking, I have seen her blue eyes gaze into the distance toward the south.”

“And how do you know all this?” John broke in. “Do you know her well?”

“I know her well, Hairy Face. My father and mother and two sisters died with the sickness which leaves the face pitted. I often go to dif-

ferent camps and last year I camped and hunted with Untoowenip and Obunahse.”

“You did, indeed?” exclaimed John. “Then tell me more, everything, you know about my lost sister.”

It seemed Toohiska liked to talk about Ellen. He told how she was the best housekeeper among all the Cree women in the whole country around, how old Chief Untoowenip was more attached to her than he was to any of his own daughters and that young Obunahse was madly in love with her. Many young Cree would like to make love to her, but all were afraid of big, violent Obunahse, who had many relatives that would take his part in a quarrel.

“I heard him say when he had drunk plenty of mad water that he would surely run his spear through any man who tried to take his white sister away from him.”

“To thunder with him!” John exclaimed angrily. “She’s very far from being his sister! I’ll show him whose sister she is!”

“Does Obunahse often drink of the mad water?”

“He does not in Untoowenip’s camp where Naungesee lives, but when he visits other camps

he drinks of it as often as he finds any and his loud singing scares away the deer when they try to cross the river."

"She'll not marry him. I'll bring her away!"

"Then Obunahse will surely kill you! And I must leave you, for he will kill me, too, if he learns I was your friend. I have no relatives in this part of the country. Obunahse has a whole clan of a dozen families who will help him fight. He will surely kill us if we try to bring away your white sister."

CHAPTER XXVIII

TO UNTOOWENIP'S CAMP

A MONTH before the spring break-up came and made travel difficult or impossible, the two friends left the camp at the mouth of the Saskatchewan.

John had told Toohiska and his other Cree friends about his experience with the carcajou. He had told them how he saw the animal carry the trap in his mouth and how he shielded his eyes with his forepaw, and the lad also told of the fearful dream he had had about this remarkable beast.

Some laughed at the terror of the white lad, for most Indians have a keen sense of humor and get as much fun out of the accidents and mishaps of their lives as white people derive from those of a very different life.

"The Chippewa," said old Chief Negiwatuh, "are good hunters of moose and white-tailed deer and they can trap beavers, but they do not know much about the Okeecoohaw. He is rare in their country, but very many of him live in the coun-

try of the Cree. I think once the Okeecoohawks, like the beavers and other animals, were people who had a language and could talk to each other; but the Great Spirit took away their language and made them animals so that the Indians could hunt them, eat their flesh and make rugs and coats out of their skins.

“The Okeecoohawks are animals now, but they remember that long ago they were people at war with the Indians and so they still hate the Indians as the Chippewa hate the Sioux. They cannot kill the Indians now with arrows and tomahawks, but they can still break up their deadfalls, carry away their traps, and steal their bait and game, and that is what every Okeecoohaw does, because he remembers that his people hated and fought the Indians just like the Indians hate and fight the Eskimos who live far to the north on the shores of the frozen sea.

“Now I have told you what I believe about the Okeecoohaw. It may be that the white traders would laugh at this, but they know very little about our animals, for white men do not live with the animals as the Indians do.”

Before the first signs of the great spring break-up appeared, John and his new Cree friend

left the camp on the Saskatchewan. All the Crees in the camp knew that the lads were going to John's carcajou camp and that they intended to bring out the furs which John had caught there and take them to the trader at Norway House; but about his big purpose in the Cree country John had not said a word to any one except Toohiska, for John had learned one great lesson among the Indians: To depend on himself and to keep his own counsel.

They found John's cache intact and the carcajou seemed to have left the country.

"You scared him away," said Toohiska; "he thought you were a devil-Indian."

They found no difficulty in providing themselves with game and they even caught some fine fur of rat and mink and of beaver and otter, for the fur of these aquatic creatures is still prime until early in spring.

They had not been long in their camp, having a really great time all by themselves when the first sign of the great spring break-up appeared.

"I smell spring!" Toohiska remarked one bright morning when the air seemed to flow gently from the south.

"You smell of muskrats," retorted John.

“You will sleep in the brush to-night if you don’t take off that dirty and bloody old hunting-shirt!”

But the Indian had smelled spring. Within a week the snow was slushy in the woods, while from the open it had almost entirely disappeared. The ice on the lakes became rotten and along the shores ran dark rings of open water.

Then the birds began to come back. Some came in broad daylight, like the big white swans, the countless hosts of geese, flying in lines a mile long like big black snakes crawling on a blue sky, and the noisy crows. Others just dropped out of the sky over night. In the evening the marshy woods near their camp were silent, the next morning they were alive with the calls of blackbirds and a medley of woodland sparrows and warblers, for which Toohiska had no special names, but called them all little music birds. John, however, noticed that many of the small birds at his northern camp were different from those he had seen in the Chippewa country. Even the blackbirds were different. They had no red shoulder-patches and were of a more rusty color, being the kind which bird men call rusty blackbirds.

For about two weeks the country was impassable. Every stream was running over and

the marshes were filled with slushy ice and snow-water, and where one could make a short cut of a few rods in winter he now would have had to travel many miles around marshes, lakes, and river bends.

But the lads didn't care. Game was plentiful now and they took life easy. It was no trick at all to shoot as many geese, ducks, and cranes as they could use.

In fine weather they explored the country and hunted, and when it rained or was blustery they lay on the skins in their cabin, gazed into the blazing fire, told stories of their experiences and made plans about bringing Ellen away, which seemed more and more difficult to them the more they thought about it.

"You can't go to Untoowenip's camp," Toohiska stated. "It will be like shooting yourself with your own gun."

"But don't you see, my friend," John retorted almost angrily, "that I will go and must go?"

"I must find my sister again. She thinks I'll come if I live and can find her. I cannot go to my parents in Kentucky and tell them that I didn't go to find Ellen because I was afraid of a

big Cree. I couldn't face my father and mother with those words."

"But you can't bring her away!" Toohiska argued. "Obunahse will murder you in your camp or he will follow your trail and fall upon you like a lynx upon the white hare."

"Now mark," retorted John hotly, "I'm not a white hare. I'll be a lynx to him. I have been"—he started to brag a little in true Indian fashion—"I have been with Owabasse to the Sioux country. The Sioux are brave warriors and fight desperately, but we brought home three scalps with us. No, I am not afraid of Obunahse even though he is big and strong and has many friends."

"Perhaps you can buy her," the Indian lad suggested. "Obunahse is as greedy as a white trader."

"And I'll gladly give all the beaver and otter skins I have to buy her free!" John exclaimed, "but if I live, I'll go to Untoowenip's camp and bring her away."

There are only two well-marked seasons in the Far North. Within a few weeks winter changes to summer, the sun shines from fourteen to eighteen hours a day, vegetation springs into life

and grows as if by magic, and the woods and tundras are alive with birds. In October or November the process is reversed almost as quickly.

And summer was upon the lads before they had realized it. So they packed up their furs and started for Norway House. Toohiska knew the country well. Small streams they waded, while larger ones and lakes which lay across their path were crossed on quickly constructed rafts.

When they reached the western branch of the Nelson they secured a canoe from some Indians and traveled by water to Norway House, where John paid his debt to McTavic.

Then they started northward in a small canoe to the camp of Untoowenip, near Oxford House, over one hundred miles toward the northeast.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE HUNTERS ARE HUNTED

It was in the middle of the afternoon when two men approached the camp of Untoowenip. A visitor in an Indian camp is always a welcome diversion, for the red forest people find their daily lives monotonous, humdrum affairs, just as white boys and men would find that life if they had to play Indian the year round.

John's eyes ran with a hungry look over the four tepees in the camp. Where was the white woman in the Cree dress, as his imagination had pictured, and as Toohiska had described her? There were old women and young women and little girls, but all were real Indians, with black hair, stolid faces and deep black eyes; only the little girls frankly showed their interest on their faces.

There seemed to be only a few men in camp. A very old man was making a pipe out of a piece of gray shale, and a few younger men were sitting around doing nothing.

Both John and Toohiska saw at a glance that Ellen was not in the camp. However, both were sure that they had discovered the right camp, and felt that they would find her.

In the distance they heard the sound of axes, and both knew at once that it meant that the women were out there cutting wood for the evening.

Toohiska sat down with one of the young men, while John went toward the woodchoppers. His heart beat fast and loud as he followed the well marked trail.

Suddenly a tall woman appeared ahead of him. Carrying a small ax in her right hand, her figure stood out tall and straight against a thicket of evergreens. John knew at once that this young woman was his sister.

He walked on till he stood within a few feet of her. For a moment both looked at each other in silence; the ax dropped from the girl's limp hand; then both forgot their acquired Indian reserve and greeted each other as long-lost brother and sister.

"Come quick," said Ellen, as soon as she could speak again, "along this side-trail. The women will come on this path very soon, and you must

tell me much before we return to the camp."

Both were amused, and laughed at their awkward use of English, which they had almost forgotten. John slipped many Chippewa terms into his account, while Ellen could not tell her story without many Cree words.

"I have often dreamed of you coming as you did," Ellen told, "but you were always a small boy, as at the time when old Mishawbo plugged us up in a hollow tree.

"I always thought you would come if you were alive; but for two years I almost gave you up. I thought you were dead. Why did you wait so very long?"

And John explained to her that for many years he had not been able to learn where she was, and that he could not have come to her or thought of bringing her away before he had learned the trails and canoe routes of the big Chippewa and Cree countries and before he had grown to be a young warrior.

"Why can't we go right now?" he asked eagerly. "We might get a good start before any one would follow us."

"Oh, I can't go, I can't go now," the girl exclaimed in agony, almost choking at the words.



JOHN KNEW AT ONCE THAT THIS YOUNG WOMAN WAS
HIS SISTER.—Page 269.

"I can't just run off and leave old Untoowenip. He's been my father and protected me against much harm. I can't just run away from him!

"And see, the squaws are already looking for us. Come, we must go to the camp."

"You are right, sister, you are right. I can't run away like this, either. I can't leave Toohiska. They would take vengeance on him and I could never forgive myself. I forgot him for a moment when it flashed through me that I might bring you away at once.

"Yes, Ellen, we must go back to camp.

"But tell me. Do you love that—that big Obunahse? Are you going to marry him?"

"No, John, I don't, and I'll never marry him. He's violent and brutal and gets drunk when he is away from camp.

"But, my brother, my brother," she whispered, "he's madly jealous and quarrelsome. I'm afraid he will kill you if he learns that you want to take me away. You must sleep with your eyes open when Obunahse is near."

Obunahse had just returned from a hunting trip with a load of caribou meat, and John was convinced that both Ellen and Toohiska had given him a true account of the man. He was

rather short, but muscular, and his searching eyes and coarse features betrayed the keen hunter and the implacable and unscrupulous enemy.

During the next few days John and Toohiska were, of course, the guests of the Cree camp, in accordance with Indian hospitality. These days of apparent friendship were a great trial to both John and Toohiska. Neither of the lads ever could see Ellen alone. It was clear that the two widowed squaws who lived in the same tepee with her had been told to watch her, and either one or both of them were always near her; so it was almost impossible to whisper even a word to her in private.

But John had made his plans, and he felt that his sister would approve of them, although he had no chance to explain them to her.

At the first opportunity he spoke frankly to the old chief:

“My father,” he said, “you know that I have come to you on a long journey to see my white sister. We were taken away from our parents long ago in the far distant country of Kentucky. I thought for a long time that our parents were dead, but now the traders have brought me word that they are still alive. Their hair is white and

their eyes are dim, and our mother has wept much for her lost children.

“I know that Untoowenip has been a good father to my sister and the white girl bears him much love, and the tears will flow from her eyes if she has to leave him.

“But our white mother is old and will grieve until she can see her children again, and if Untoowenip will let my sister go with me I will give him ten good packs of beaver, which shall contain four hundred large skins or their value in other fur.

“I shall ask for Untoowenip’s answer to-morrow.”

When the two young friends entered the lodge of the old chief next day, Obunahse was also there.

After the old chief had smoked in silence for awhile he laid away his pipe.

“My sons,” he spoke, “you have come on a long journey to see the white sister of Hairy Face, and now you wish to take her away.”

Then he went on to say that he was now an old man who was poor and could not hunt much and that Ellen was his best daughter, but he ended by stating that if John would bring him ten packs

of large beavers he would give up his white daughter.

John accepted the offer as promptly as Cree etiquette permitted, rejoicing in his heart that the thing he had worried about so much had been so easy, but the chief was not through.

"My son," he took up the talk, "will also be very lonesome and you must give him also ten packs of large beaver, and you should catch them all in the Cree Country before you return to the Chippewas."

John was delighted even at these terms, although to catch eight hundred large beavers was no small piece of work even in a good beaver country.

"My father," he replied, "has spoken with great kindness to me, and my red brother and I shall catch the beavers if we can find them, and two packs of beavers which I have in my lodge I shall give to my father to-day, so he may see that I wish to thank him for his kindness to my sister."

As soon as they could make ready, John and Toohiska left for a number of lakes southeast of Oxford House, where beavers were said to be plentiful and where no Cree was at that time

trapping. These lakes were known to the Cree as Manitou Lake, Beaverhill Lake, and Island Lake. Among the big lakes of Canada, they look small but everywhere else they would be considered large, each being from six to twenty miles in width by twenty or thirty miles long.

The two lads were happy when they left the Cree camp, for they had learned to enjoy camping by themselves just as two white boy friends will often have a better time by themselves than in a crowd, and an Indian camp is always a crowd, and a very mixed crowd. Until this winter neither lad had ever been able to follow his own way and will and now they could not get enough of their new freedom.

“Why does Untoowenip want us to catch the beavers in the Cree country?” John asked, as they traveled southeastward on a dim trail.

“His mind is dark to me,” replied the young Cree thoughtfully. “Untoowenip is a good man; if Obunahse had asked it I should suspect evil.”

“May be Obunahse put it into the mind of his father.”

“If he did it was an evil design, and we must not allow our eyes to sleep when Obunahse is near.”

Arrived at the chain of lakes, the lads made their camp at the inlet to Beaverhill Lake, and after they had built a canoe, they began to explore the shore of their lakes and the numerous small streams that run into it. Some days they went together in the canoe, at other times one explored on foot and the other by boat.

They found beaver very plentiful, and were in high spirits, for besides beaver, they found also many signs of otter, fisher, marten, and caribou, saw several moose and found rabbits plentiful, a good sign for the trapper if they are not too plentiful.

“We shall catch the twenty sacks of beaver next winter and we shall have plenty of meat in our camp,” they said.

Such a fine time the lads had in their summer camp that John almost forgot that two mothers and a sister were anxiously awaiting his return, and that he had an enemy in the camp at Oxford House—in fact, his enemy he forgot for days at a time.

But one evening, after they had enjoyed their friendship and freedom about two weeks, Too-hiska, who was the first one in camp, seemed to be weighed down with some trouble.

John observed that his friend was not himself and asked: "What troubles my brother; has he eaten too much moose-meat and had a bad dream last night?"

However, the Cree was evidently not in a joking mood. He looked gloomily at his friend and after a while he related his trouble.

"My mind is puzzled," he said. "This afternoon while I was scouting along a beaver pond, I bent down to dip a handful of water out of a stream. Just as I rose something flew past my chest and struck in the floating rushes in the pond."

"Perhaps it was a bird or flying-squirrel," suggested John.

"My brother, you talk foolish now," replied Toohiska a little vexed. "A squirrel does not fly into the rushes and my eyes are keen enough to see a bird.

"It flew swifter than a bird and it made a white break on the twig of a balsam fir. A flying bird breaks no twigs."

"Did you see any one?" asked John with his eyes flashing.

"When I saw the broken twig, I fell down quick behind a log for I thought, 'arrow!'"

"I lay still a long time but nobody came.

"Then I crept down to the pond and very slowly and very quietly like the mink I crept a long way to the moose trail and then I arose and walked to camp with my gun ready, but I saw nothing and heard nothing."

"Do you think it was Obunahse?" asked John.

"Who else could it be?"

"Why did he use an arrow and not a gun?"

"An arrow does not speak with a noise. If he had killed me with an arrow he would have aimed his gun at you and neither of us would have returned to the Cree camp and your Chipewa mother would never have heard of you again."

The friends talked little more that night and on the following days they did not separate for their explorations.

A few days later they went back to the little stream and carefully examined the broken branch.

"It was done by an arrow," both of them said, and while Toohiska stood watch, John swam to the floating island and found the steel-tipped arrow.

That arrow took the joy out of their summer

camp; and they traveled about in silence like the hunted wild creatures of the forest. They built no camp-fires in the evening and never left their guns out of reach; for they felt that they were hunted, and they watched for the slightest sign of their enemy. However, during a whole week they found neither trail, nor bed, nor fireplace of any human being.

About two weeks later, when the effect of the attack on Toohiska had begun to wear off, the boys again separated so that each one might explore a small beaver stream.

John was leisurely following a moose trail which led around the pond, when he thought he heard the snapping of a twig behind him. He turned to look and even walked back a few paces, but could see or hear nothing. He went along slowly, viewing the pond for signs and houses of beaver. As his eyes caught several beaver swimming about near one of the lodges, he stopped to watch them, and in order to get a better view of them, he knelt down. Just as he let himself down, a gun cracked and John felt a stinging blow on his left shoulder and feeling for the spot, saw his fingers covered with blood.

No sooner did he realize what had happened

than his fighting spirit was up, he rushed off in the direction from which the shot had come and had no difficulty in locating the spot by the smoke of the powder.

A big man was springing away through the trees, but when he knew himself almost caught, he turned at the boy like a cornered wild beast.

Not a word was spoken. With his knife drawn John rushed at the big Indian, who also had his knife drawn.

For a few seconds each enraged man tried to give the other the death wound. Then the white man, on account of his better condition and abstinence from all dissipation, proved too quick for his murderous red enemy. He clinched the Indian's wrist, and jamming his hand against a tree made him drop the knife.

"Now fight fair!" he cried, as he went at his antagonist as hard as he could. It was not boxing and it was not wrestling, but some of both. But the Indian, although he was heavier and more thickset than the white lad, first lost his wind and courage. He was not prepared for this kind of fight and an unguarded blow on the temple made him stumble to the ground.

Quick as a flash the white lad had him by

the throat and choked him into unconsciousness.

Then he gave the signal yell for Toohiska, once, twice, three times. When Toohiska came he found his white friend stripped to the waist and bleeding at the shoulder and from several knife wounds and looking more ferocious than he had ever seen a man before.

Near him lay Obunahse, his hands and legs tied with thongs of buckskin from John's cut-up hunting shirt, and with a rope of buckskin John was tying his enemy's neck to a tree.

"Kill him," exclaimed Toohiska. "The devil is in him. Kill him!"

"No, Toohiska, you can't kill him, because he is the son of Untoowenip. I almost did kill him," John cried. "But we're through here; our contract with Untoowenip is off. We'll get out as soon as we can.

"You must go with me, you can't stay here after this."

Toohiska was ready to leave the Cree country.

"I start for Untoowenip's camp at once," John continued. "You keep this dog here to-night. To-morrow you start for my camp at Norway House. Follow the dim trail straight west and you will strike my camp in a day. You

unbind this scoundrel. I have thrown his gun into the beaver pond, you take away his moccasins so he can't travel fast.

“I'll get Ellen when she goes to cut wood. My canoe is ready and we'll meet you at my camp near Norway House as soon as possible. If all goes well we'll be there on the third evening.”

CHAPTER XXX

HEARTS HEAVY AND HEARTS LIGHT

JOHN traveled as long as he could follow the trail. When it grew too dark, he ate a little dried meat, rolled himself in the blanket he had brought from the camp and tried to sleep; but sleep came to him only in snatches; and at the first dawn of day he started again on his march.

It was still early in the afternoon when he hid himself near Untoowenip's camp and watched for an opportunity of seeing Ellen. This came soon when Ellen walked down to a little stream to get a caribou skin which she had been soaking in the water, preparatory to tanning it.

Instinctively Ellen knew that something was wrong.

"Brother, what has happened?" she asked quickly under her breath. "He's been away a long time. If I had only known where to find you, I should have come to tell you. What has happened? Have you killed him?"

"No, I have not killed him, but he tried to kill

me. We had a fight and I tied him up, but he is not much hurt. He'll be here to-morrow or next day. But now you can't stay here any longer. We must flee at once. He will lie about the fight when he returns, and I fear all the men in camp will take his side."

"No, brother, we can't go that way. The men in camp may believe him; Untoowenip will believe what you and I tell him. We must go to him."

Untoowenip was sitting alone in front of his skin tepee.

"What brings my children here at this time?" he asked as he rose to greet John.

"My father, I must tell you frankly what has happened. My brother and Obunahse have fought a battle, but Obunahse will return to his camp; he is alive and not much wounded."

Ellen had noticed the troubled expression on Untoowenip's face when she began her story, but when he heard that his son was not killed his wrinkled face brightened and his keen eyes looked with kindness upon John.

"I am much grieved, my children," he spoke after a long pause, "at the news you bring me. But you must now go away and travel swiftly to

the country of the Chippewa, for I could not stay the hands of my son, Obunahse.

“Gladness will leave my heart when my eyes can no longer see the face of my white daughter. I had prayed to the Manitou that Naungesee would always remain with me and that she would place tobacco and food on my grave, for I am a very old man and shall soon go on the great journey to the land of the spirits.

“My children, you must not stay till Obunahse returns, you must go and I shall pray that the Great Spirit send you smooth water on the rivers and a good wind on the great Lake Winnipeg,” and with that the old chief turned away into the tepee to hide the tears that stole from his eyes.

Ellen slipped in after him to bid him a last farewell, for the old man had been a real father to her ever since the death of his wife, about five years ago. He had made her life as happy as he could and had protected her from all insults and indignities as his adopted daughter. When she came out of the tepee she was holding her hand over her eyes and sobbing like a child.

After she had taken a blanket and a few other things from her tepee she was ready to leave the Cree people with whom she had lived nearly ten

years, and she walked in silence with her brother to the canoe landing.

They reached Norway House the second evening and found Toohiska awaiting them. He had killed a small caribou and large pieces of the meat were broiling over the fire for the hungry travelers, who had enjoyed only short rests and had had but little to eat on their journey of seventy-five miles, on which they had carried the canoe and their blankets around many rapids and pushed and paddled against a strong current.

After Ellen had recovered from the sharp pain of leaving her kind old Cree protector, the trip became the most joyful that any three people ever made in the Cree country. With fair weather and three happy and high-spirited young people using the paddles, they covered great distances on the long June days.

In less than ten days they traversed the length of Lake Winnipeg, traveled up the turbulent Winnipeg River, crossed the Lake of the Sandhills, paddled up the broad Rainy River and the narrow Rapid River and walked into Netnowa's camp, which John had left about ten months before.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE LAST LONG JOURNEY

OLD NETNOWA had been growing feeble for some time. She talked little and often sat for hours since the return of the birds to the north, watching the waters of Rapid River glide northward among the white trunks of poplars and birches.

“ My son, my white son will never return,” she often murmured, without knowing that she gave voice to her thoughts. “ The waves of the Muddy Water have swallowed him, or the Cree have killed him in a fight, for he was a hot-headed boy and made a fight for his white sister.”

It was with these sad thoughts written on her weather-beaten face that she spied a canoe with three people pushing around the bend below her tepee, and with the keenness of a mother’s eye, she recognized the tall, slim steersman in the stern.

With the agility of a young girl, she reached the landing before the canoe touched the shore, and no white mother ever embraced more rapturously a lost son come to life again.

To Ellen and Toohiska, also, her motherly affection went out at once.

“They are my children, too,” she said, “for they have no mother here.”

And then she made a great feast. “For my children,” she exclaimed, “must be very hungry.”

There was meat of moose and deer both dried and fresh, boiled grouse and dried blueberries and maple sugar. And when nobody could eat any more, John and Ellen and Toohiska had to tell their stories, but she wished most to hear from Ellen about her long lonesome life among the Cree, of whose language Netnowa understood enough to follow Ellen’s account, for the Cree and the Chippewa languages are very similar.

“Oh, my white daughter,” she whispered, “thy voice is sweet and soft like the rippling of little brooks and like the song of the thrush in the balsams. Tell us more of the good old chief, Untowenip, and of the bad man who would love thee.”

It was long past midnight when she let the fire burn low in the center of the tepee and said:

“Now, my sons, you must go to sleep on the bearskins in your tepee, but my white daughter will sleep next to the fire on my own mats and I

have plenty of blankets and deerskins to keep her warm.”

Within a few days their plans were made for the future. In a large canoe John and Toohiska, Ellen and Netnowa started for the Sault Ste. Marie. It was a long journey, but with two high-spirited young men to paddle the canoe and two happy women to cook the game and fish, the long trip became a pleasure and the hard long portages only gave the young men a chance to display their strength and quickness.

For the first time in many, many years, Netnowa was free from cares and worry. Her three daughters, left behind in the Chippewa country were married to good men and she was happy with her adopted children.

John had at first planned that Netnowa and Toohiska should stay at the Sault while he and Ellen went to visit their parents in Kentucky. But Netnowa would not hear of it.

“No, no,” she said, “I believe you, my children, you would come back to your old Chippewa mother, but I must go with you. I wish to see once more before I die, some of the many places where I played when I was a little girl and where

I lived with my husband, Taweninne, and my son, Keewatin. And I wish to see the white mother of my son and tell her that he is a good son and that I love him much."

And when she was told that the long journey would be hard for her, she laughed and exclaimed: "I'm not old now! Since my son has come back to me, I'm young again and I can paddle a canoe as far as my tall white daughter."

This argument could not be gainsaid, for she did indeed do as much work as any of the four. So they continued their long journey by easy stages and about the middle of August they arrived at Detroit.

It was here that both the young whites and Netnowa began to note many changes that had taken place since John and Ellen had passed there as the captives of Mishawbo.

"Look, John, look, Mother," Ellen pointed out, "that is the spot where John and I were plugged up in a hollow tree, and a settler has built a log cabin on the spot," and their old mother laughed heartily and told some of the funny and foolish things John and Womegew had done. How John shot his first pigeon, how he tied a rabbit in a pot

of bear-grease to frighten his mother, and many other incidents.

Along the Maumee and Big Miami Rivers they found many log houses of settlers where about ten years ago there had been an unbroken forest. They traveled now as fast as they could, and about the first of September they reached their home in Kentucky.

The parents of John and Ellen had learned at Detroit that John was alive among the Chippewa, but of Ellen they had heard nothing.

When four people, all dressed like Indians, walked into the clearing of Joshua Runnels, his good wife remarked: "Some more hungry Indians! Joshua, better get some sour milk out of the cellar and cut this corn bread into four pieces."

But when two young Indians, bareheaded, walked in, and the lad said in English: "Mother, we have come back. We're your twins. Don't you know us any more?" the white mother stood speechless, and the wooden spoon she was holding dropped from her hand.

The news that the lost Runnels twins had come back spread quickly through the settlement and

on Sunday the house was filled with neighbors who rejoiced with old Joshua and his wife at the return of the children, whom for years all had given up for lost or dead.

If during the long winter evenings the four strangers told wonderful stories of the fur country to their eager listeners, they in turn learned much that had happened in the country of the whites.

Some of the men in the neighborhood had served in the war of 1812 and some had taken part in the great battle on the Thames River in Ontario, in which the great chief, Tecumseh, was killed. The news of these events had reached the distant fur country only after a long time and often in a distorted form.

When spring came, Netnowa grew homesick for the country of many lakes and evergreens. As the white parents of John and Ellen in no way needed the help or support of the twins, they were willing that both should return with Netnowa and Toohiska.

“We will put up our tepees at the Great Rapids where the water of Gitchegumee runs into Lake Huron. From there my red children can sometimes come and see their old mother, and you and

Ellen can go again to see your white parents," Netnowa told John.

When the party arrived at the Sault Ste. Marie, John and Ellen built themselves a log house and John bought furs and traded with the Indians, but Netnowa, although she ate at their table, would not take the room they offered her.

"I cannot sleep in a white man's house," she explained, "but when it gets very cold, may be, I will come into the log tepee," but she never did.

As the years passed, she loved more and more to sit in the sun in front of her tepee and let her mind roam again over the long journeys she made from Lake Huron to the Assiniboin. But when the old black-coated father whose hair was as white as that of Netnowa greeted her with a friendly: "*Bon jour, ma sœur,*" a friendly smile lit up her sad, wrinkled face as she answered in Chippewa: "Good morning, Father! Will you stay and talk?"

And the old father told wonderful stories of French chateaux and of Paris, the big camp of the French king; and how Moses and the Children of Israel traveled forty years in the desert.

"Yes, I see," she would say then, "Moses was a big chief. He was bigger than Tecumseh or

Pontiac. And was he a great hunter of moose and deer and buffalo?"

"No, no," the old father would answer, a little irritated. "My sister, I have told you that Moses was no hunter. The Lord made no moose and deer in the desert."

"But the many, many Children of Israel would die if they had no meat."

"The good Lord sent them great flocks of quail, they are fat birds, and he let the sweet manna fall during the night."

"The manna, Father, was it pieces of maple sugar that fell down like the hail does in our country? And the birds? Father, so many birds cannot live without trees. I do not understand it."

"Moses was a big chief because so many men followed him, but he must have been a poor hunter. Taweninne could have shown him where to find moose and deer and buffalo and beaver ponds."

"No, no, sister! No ponds, no beavers!" the father exclaimed with a lively gesture.

"It was a poor country!" she said. "I am glad Manitou did not put the Ojibway in that bad country."

The story of the flood she understood much better.

“Yes, Father,” she remarked, “it rained so much that all the rivers and lakes ran over and Chief Noah with his big canoe sailed clear over the trees and the hills.”

And one morning in June when the father called, his old sister had not arisen. He bent aside the deerskin door of the tepee and saw that his sister had gone to the land of spirits to join Taweninne and Keewatin of whom she had often spoken within the last few days.

When the day grew cool, John and Ellen laid the body of their dead mother, wrapped in her best blankets, in a large, well-built canoe. The white-haired father was seated next to his dead sister and with powerful silent strokes they headed the canoe toward Grand Portage.

“My children,” Netnowa had said when she felt that her days were counted, “if Manitou sends a fair wind, when I die, then pray take me across Gitchegumee and bury me near Taweninne and Keetwatin.”

A few days later, when the stars had just come out, friendly voyageurs dug a grave at the side of

Taweninne. They tied rolls of birch-bark around the blankets which contained the remains of the best mother of the Chippewa. When the hard-faced voyageurs softly dropped the earth on the birch-bark, the tears of Netnowa's children mingled with the red earth on her grave. The good French father said a silent prayer over his departed sister, even though she had never comprehended some of the messages of the Good Book, but John and Ellen left on her grave a small black kettle, a handful of dried berries, and a little wood, for that had been her last request.

To the chief, Untoowenip, John had sent in blankets, axes, knives, guns, and ammunition to the value of the promised beaver-skins. Once every summer he also sent him a big mocock of maple-sugar, for no sugar-trees grow in the Cree country north of Lake Winnipeg. When the trader came back, who had taken the fourth mocock, he brought word that the old chief had started on the long journey to the land of spirits.

The descendants of Netnowa live in the Chippewa country of Minnesota to this day, while the children's children of John and Ellen are scattered over the plains of Manitoba and among the lakes of Minnesota, and perhaps some of them

may have heard the story of Nunduwah, the white son of Netnowa, and of fair Naungesee, the white daughter of Untoowenip, the good old chieftain among the Cree.

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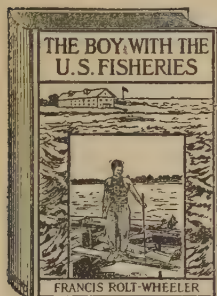
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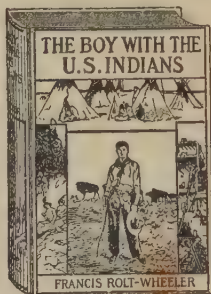
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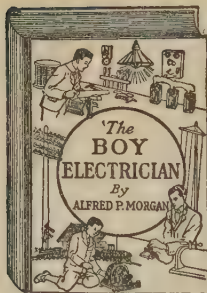
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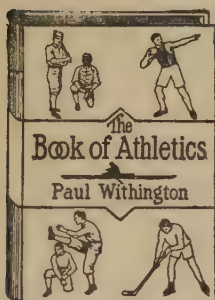
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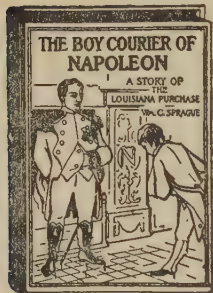
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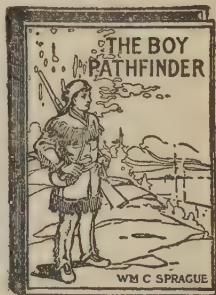
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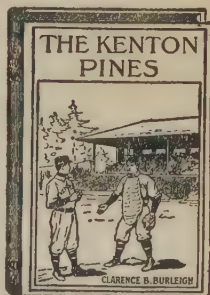
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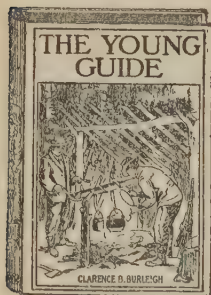
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